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VOL. XXIII

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Terracottas



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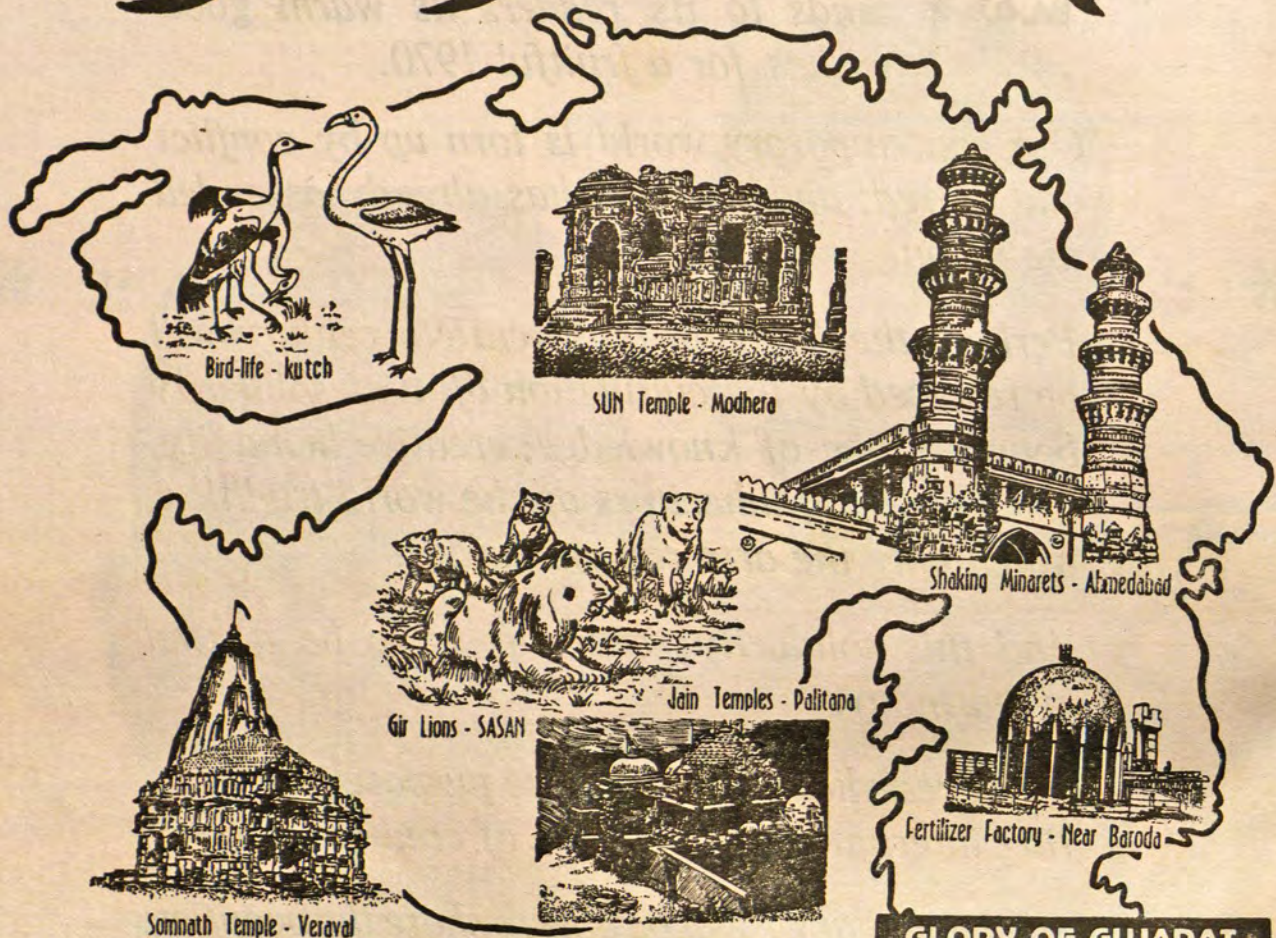
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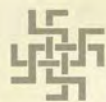


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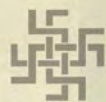
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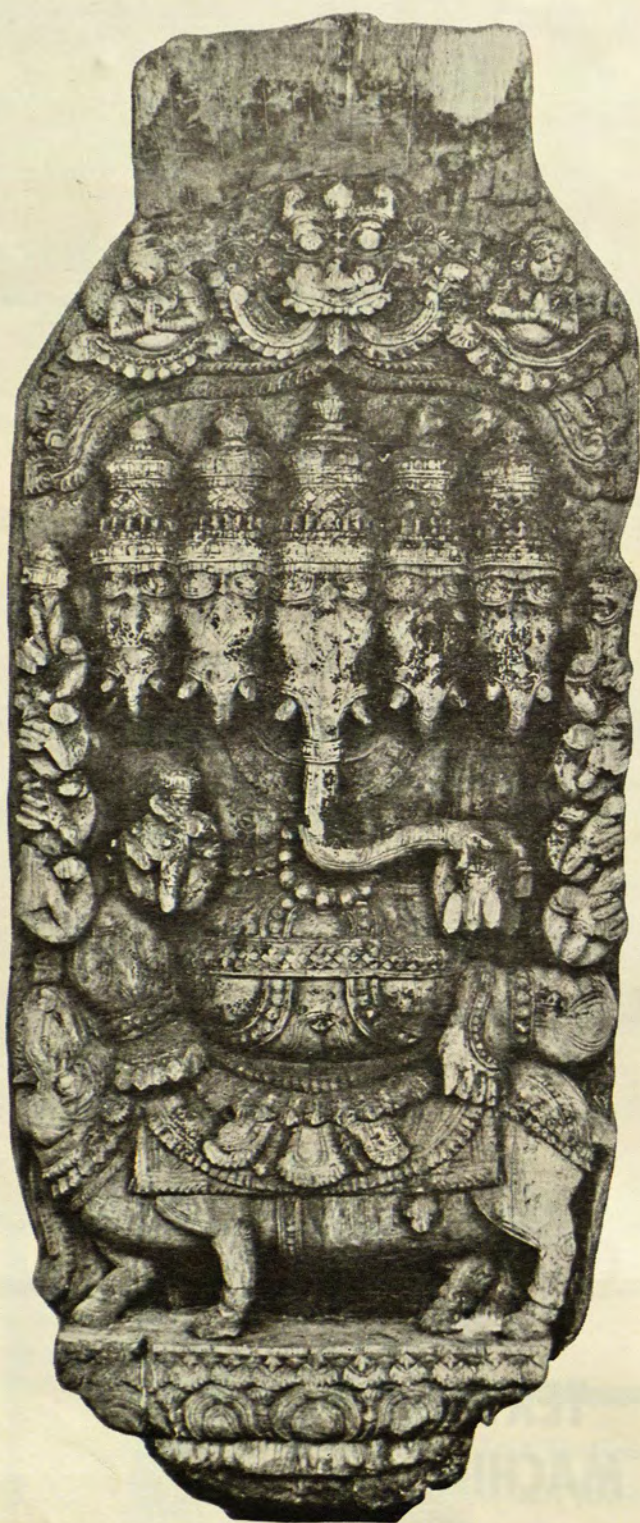
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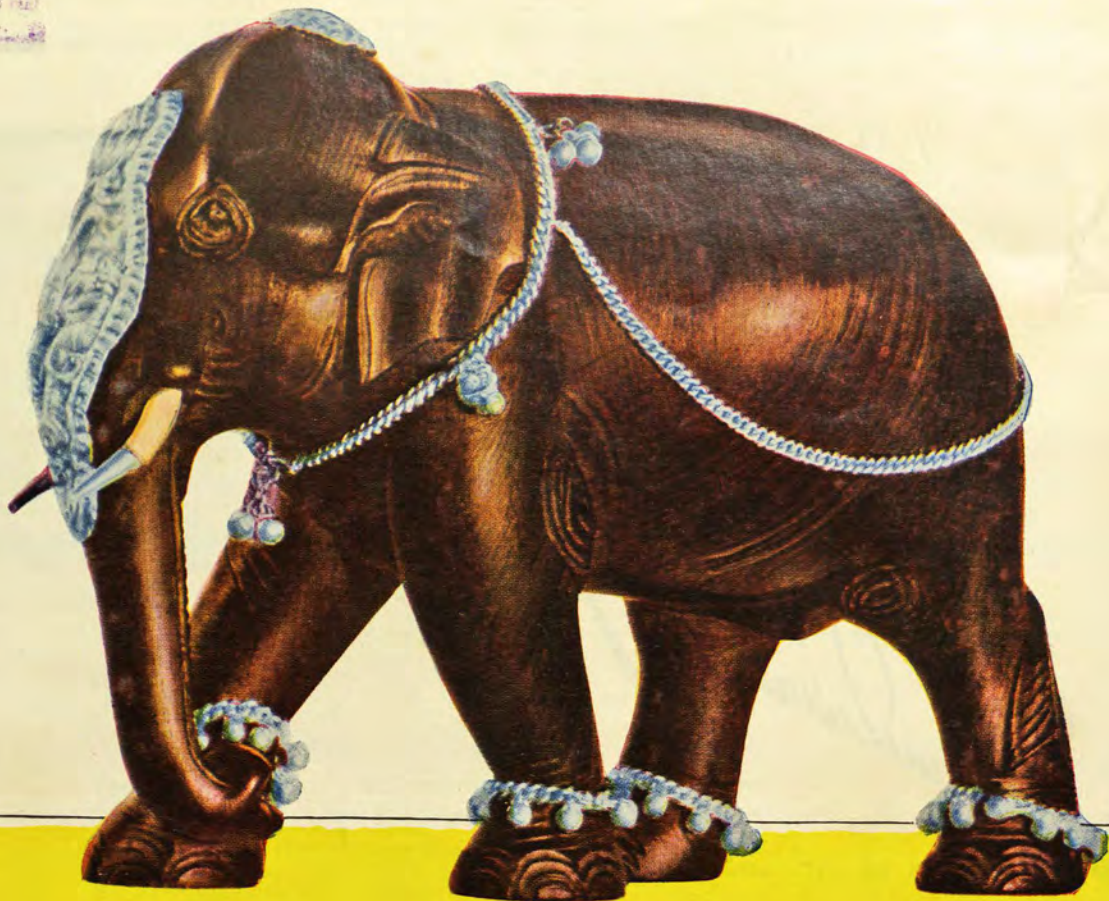
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A Magazine of the Arts

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VOLUME XXIII

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NUMBER 1

EDITORIAL

Clay in the hands of man in India made for the
'Quick' of life in Terracotta Images
by Mulk Raj Anand

I. BEAUTIES BORN IN THE MUD OF THE POTTER'S YARD:

Notes on old terracottas
by Mulk Raj Anand

II PORTFOLIO:

From pictures and notes of
Ananda Coomaraswamy, K. P. Jayaswal,
Stella Kramrisch, S. K. Saraswati,
Mulk Raj Anand, D. P. Ghosh, R. C. Agrawala,
S. P. Srivastava and R. Das Gupta

III THE TERRACOTTA ART OF INDIA

by H. D. Sankalia & M. K. Dhavalikar
SUPPLEMENT

The entire layout of this issue has been carried out by Kumari D. H. Sahiar.

Cover: Dancer from Bulandi Bagh. (Courtesy: Patna Museum)

The inspiration of this issue of MARG originally came from the late V. S. Agrawala, who had hoped to edit the number for us. The issue is, therefore, dedicated to his memory. With the passing of Shri Vasudev Sharan Agrawala, the generation of Ananda Coomaraswamy successors in the field of art history has lost one more devotee. Prof. Agrawala came all the way from his apprenticeship to archaeology in the Mathura and Lucknow Museums through his work with the National Museum and as Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey to Professorship of art and architecture in the Benaras Hindu University. During his lifetime of consistent labours, he extended the first hunches of the earlier scholars into exact knowledge by relating various art works to their sources and religion, philosophy, custom and literature of the ages.

MARG wishes to thank the curators of National Museum, Prince of Wales Museum, Municipal Museum (Allahabad), Patna Museum and Lucknow Museum for their courtesy in allowing photographs of terracottas in their collections to appear in this issue.

We have considered it appropriate to assemble the pictures and notes of various authors in a consecutive survey in the portfolio for the benefit of the uninitiated. Therefore, apart from the names of these contributors, before this section no other separate acknowledgement has been made. We ask to be excused for this enforced anonymity of the Portfolio.



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Clay in the Hands of Man in India made for the 'Quick' of Life in Terracotta Images

Clay has been the softest and the most pliable material in the hands of the Indian craftsman. The earth of our country from the alluvial river valleys, deltas and even the parched plains lent itself for modelling into images from the earliest times. In fact, it is the potter's art that connects us to the proto-historic civilisations of the Baluch country, Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Rupar, Maheshwar, Lothal, and the rest. And as the rural pattern has remained more or less constant, the first forms of terracotta images, toys and utensils have not changed until today.

Within the stereotypes there was, of course, the differentiation in the pinching and squeezing with the nimble fingers and the application of pellets of the original manufacturers, then the skilled men took to moulding in casts and new techniques of baking were invented. Also, the painting changed—glazes were discovered.

The most astounding thing is the continuity of impulse which sustained this art form through the succeeding generations.

This is helpful because we have no sculptures of the early historical periods. We can only reconstruct some of the forms of those times from the terracottas. Essentially, the peoples' art, the clay image, often supplied the models for the carver's sensibility.

The aesthetics of the terracottas is in the primitivist vitality. The simple abstracted forms denote power. The sensuous, warm flesh of the naked goddess, with the emphasised pudenda, suggests unashamed acceptance of sexual energies. The impersonation of demoniac faces adumbrates the moods of terror and fear which must be appeased in a permanent contact with the artefact that afford release through magical offering. The toy carts pulled with the string by the children are often lovable bird forms from whom the young are supposed to acquire tenderness from early years. The whistles produced the sound which was later to become music.

If there is a dominant strain in the various forms of terracottas, it is with the love of volumes from the curvacious belly of the Harappa torso to the Kuberas to the contemporary Ganpati, the emphasis is on the protuberances. The linear rhythm of early terracottas were also to enter sculpture. The filling in of the image-idea-image through the imagination, with the concrete elements of the murti was always an attempt at expression of the inner region. The hands induced through the kinetic energy in inspiration from the heart of the artisan. No self-consciousness intervenes between the impulse and execution.

If the nimble fingers of our young lose contact with the making of objects, our genius for expression will be lost forever.



Beauties born in the mud of the potter's yard

Notes on old Terracottas

Our knowledge of the early civilisations of man is very scanty. The evolutionary hypothesis of the origin of our species was not put forward until the 19th century. And all conjectures about the unequal and tardy growth of *homo sapiens*, by mutation from the ape, were not accepted by the various dogmatic faiths.

Anthropology was studied from the point of view of the superior civilisations of Europe, as part of the 'white man's burden'. Except that the facts, which came to light from Morgan, Tylor, Frazer, Malinowsky and the others, were disconcerting and suggested that the pinks, the browns and the blacks, were all equally derived from the same previous animal origins.

History was written mostly from the point of view of the winners, among the various clans of the West, to bolster the pride of each Imperialism against the other. And when Marx propounded the theory that the means of production determine consciousness, he was pooh-poohed, in spite of the fact that he had praised the middle class for bringing about the greatest revolution in the whole of human history through the fight against feudalism.

Archaeology was in its elementary beginnings and served to boost the glory of the white kings, in so far as the skillful, majestic and plastic works of the old 'Native' dynasties of Babylon, Egypt, China, India, Persia, Africa, were displayed in the museums of Europe, and later, of America, as tokens of barbaric splendour against the sophisticated imitations of the naturalistic portraiture in ancient Greek and Roman art. All this was upset by new 20th century diggings by the younger men who had benefited from the source materials of the 19th century scholars in the West.

Ruskin and Morris both tried to emphasise the creative element in human design, in all civilisations. They were so far shocked by the loss of integral connection between the hand, the heart and the product of the new age, that they

blamed the machine for having deprived whole peoples of initiative. It was only later that they saw that it is the motive behind the use of the machine, i.e. the reduction of man to a robot, that alienates human being from the creative role he actually plays in any civilisation. The push of biology urges perfection of the organism, and is the drive of evolution itself. The advance-guard of artists and critics, specially Gropius, le Corbusier and Picasso, were to restore the value of creativeness as such and make the vitality of art of all civilisations the real test of the degree of awareness they may have reached.

The impact of the re-discovery of the 'quick' of the primitive art-forms helped to give value to the researches of the obscure men, who had emerged from the orbit of the arrogant West and the imitationist middle sections of the East and objectively built up the sciences of anthropology, history and archaeology.

It is in the context of this important field work in the pre-historic civilisations of Babylon, Sumeria, Egypt, India and Persia that we are now able to derive some vague ideas about how man lived in those human orders during the two or three thousand years before the Christian era.

The use of these studies of pre-historic civilisations is not to adumbrate the so-called 'cultural heritage' about which our semi-literate publicmen boast so much from political platforms, to compensate themselves for their lack of culture, past or present. But it is to find out, from the surviving images, symbols, signs and art works, what kind of people were our ancestors and whether they have anything to give us for our very different and changed times and how they evolved forms.

2

One of the fundamental urges which seems to be present in the near-ape-man described by Darwin, or our shaggy ancestors of the tree dwelling, hunting stage and fruit gathering phase, or the nomadic cattle grazing civilisation,

No boasting about 'Cultural heritage' necessary: only knowledge of evolution of forms.

The Study of early Civilisations is still in its infancy.

The role of the new Archaeology.



or the agrarian earth scratching eras, or the machine wielding man today, is to express himself, to communicate. It may be the sheer physical exuberance from which the thump, thump, thump of the 1, 2, 3 beat of the dance began, which was both the happiness of killing the prey, or gathering the harvest, or reaching the destination, as well as the exercise of the body-soul. It was again the sheer need to display the vibrations of the innermost chords of a gifted voice, which may have led to the dithyramb of the song or poem. It could be the instinctive love-work-play by which the kinetic energies move into the hands and form shapes of clay or stone or wood or colour, that may be the source of image making.

Added to these expressionist motivations, in different times, under different conditions of climate, as a byproduct of the evolution of new means of production, and the ensuing growth of consciousness, is the purposive intent which makes itself felt. The expression was called for by the 'other mind', which was always brooding on the routine life, to appease the fear that man has always felt of the elements: And thus he produced magical totems, sometimes to help him to productive ends, and more often to appease images of dread, of beneficence or guilt.

In the pre-historic civilisations of the East, we find that man senses the presence of something behind everything. And he seems to make fundamental images of those forms which he considers more important.

One spirit seems to be common among all the early civilisations, and that is Mother, source of life, later the 'naked Goddess', the beloved creator who appears with emphatic pudenda as a symbol of fertility. She may have derived from the mother cult, which seems to have been the earliest known myth of the civilisations from India across Persia, to the Mediterranean, up to the north pole. And, of course, there were other minor godlings. The belief in the potencies of these images makes them communicate even to us, at a much later time, but with inherited affiliations, the fundamental urges of being heirs to the life force of the artisans who exteriorised them, and who heighten our own realisations.

3

Some of the earliest known symbols of pre-historic India, which have been found during the last half a century of patient digging have come from north and south Baluchistan. They have been ascribed to the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C.

These objects derive from the north Baluchistan culture of the valley of the river

Zhob. Others have been picked up from southern Baluchistan off the Makaran coast, from a typical site called Kulli.

The Zhob and Kulli cultures, evidenced mainly from the painted pottery and terracotta figurines, seem to coincide in their later phases, with the Indus valley Mohenjo-Daro culture and the Harappan culture of the banks of the Ravi. As the sites in the Bolan Pass, near Quetta, and some other sites in Sind, as well as in the Null valley in Baluchistan, have also yielded a few pieces of buff-ware, the whole area seems to have been pervaded by similar civilisation patterns.

Standing on the earth, treading the hills and forests, men and women stretch their brooding gaze around them, sense the dangers from the presences occupying the vast spaces. Death stalks at their heels. Snakes, tigers, wild bulls must be appeased. Passion, will and mood must be evoked through amulets, charms, philtres. Children must play with birds, animals, sounds, and sights, to grow and confront life.

Surprisingly, the images of this layer of civilisation are works of mature plastic ability and seem to suggest previous long practice.

The most numerous of these terracotta figurines are of women and animals, as also there are toys-like bird whistles.

The females are expressionistically put together. The main parts of the body, like eyes, breasts and pudenda are exaggerated by being stuck on to the torso, in the applique technique. The modelling of the figure is in terms of swellings, as from within. The jewellery and the hair is also put on in separate bits of clay. The features are symbolic. The forehead is narrow. The nose is pinched up. The eyes are like circular beads. The mouth tends to disappear. The hands fall away loosely.

Only in one female figure are the hands shown raised above the breasts. Another shows a woman with two babies held in the arms. The hair is massed up round the forehead almost like a turban, or sometimes falls across the shoulders in two broad plaits. They wear conical earrings. They have necklaces, with round or oval pendants around their necks, as also collar beads. The arms are adorned with armlets and bangles.

Ostensibly, these figures were put on some mandala and worshipped. The recurrence of the mother and child motif suggests they were probably fertility goddesses, to whom the worshippers could reach in the densest dark, in whose care they could be freed of all dreads,

The Zhob and Kulli cultures.

Figurines of women, animals and children's toys in Kulli culture.

The sources of creative works.

Animism.

Mother Goddess.



from whose body they could derive enough love to go on the thorny pathways. Mother could give plenitude of energy.

The animals from the Kulli, Shahi-Tump and Mahi-Tump sites, particularly feature the humped bull, sometimes with coloured vertical stripes, painted eyes and horns and necks. This may be the traditional Brahmini Bull of India worshipped for his potency. These figures are also energised. The power of the animal is shown through heavy legs, emphasised torso, specially with protruding hump. The Bull radiates brute strength, in all cultures, where men drive carts. The children's toys show bull figurines, terracotta wheels fitted to axles, apart from the bird whistles.

In the Zhob culture, there has been found a fragment representing the front part of a horse. The bulls here are similar to those of the Kulli sites. The modelling of the animal figures is more naturalistic in the Zhob valley. The fingers of the craftsmen seem to be more supple and practised in portraiture. The females in the Zhob area as in Kulli, seem to have been deities, as they end below the waist, with flat bottoms, obviously meant for installation on a platform.

The modelling is still expressionistic, but with an inclination towards recognisable delineation of the features. The forehead is high and smooth. The nose looks like an owl beak, with hollow eyeholes, where circular eyes could probably be inserted. The breasts are rounded. The nipples are stuck on. There is massive head-dress and jewellery stuck on in strips. The whole horrific outlook seems to suggest the mother goddess in terrible mood, specially because of the impact of the grinning skull. Mother was not only beneficent: she could be all powerful and destroy man's enemies: the truth of woman was to defend her children against the demons, and become creator again.

The plastic qualities which were to persist in later Indian terracottas and sculpture seem then to have been present in the Kulli and Zhob cultures. There is a naive drama, the exteriorisation of the body-soul experience, through vigorous crude limbs, symptomatic of power. And there is a certain primitive simplification or abstraction, inevitably following from the attempt to notice fundamentals. Man becomes Power and shapes his instincts in a haphazard manner, but in the ardent colour of his soul.

4

If the Zhob valley culture seems to show more skill in plastic handling than the Kulli

culture, then the Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro phase, with their extension of the same techniques, and added skill, seem to go beyond the hangover of the third millennium B.C. of the Kulli and Zhob phases.

The fundamental features seem to persist, though there is some advance in manipulation of forms. It is likely that the Harappa-Mohenjo-Daro period developed an urbanised culture, based on an agricultural-commercial economy, beyond the hill terrace cultivation of the Kulli and Zhob cultures. Thus they took the old techniques beyond the small mountain civilisations to the development of the plains. In fact, the patternised life of the Harappa-Mohenjo-Daro-Rupar-Lothal phase might have been brought about by fairly highly organised communities, ruled by central authorities. The planned houses built in burnt brick, the stamp seals, weights and measures, and a script, betoken organised initiatives of the communities under the orders of chiefs. They had learnt to sail the seas. They began trudging on long routes. They upturned the earth to advantage.

This higher development in the ordering of life is also evidenced in the greater skill employed both in the popular terracotta figurines, as also in the self-conscious sculptures in stone and bronze.

As a matter of fact the two distinct traditions of creative work begin to be evident during this period: the folk survival of terracottas and the chiselled images patronised by the upper orders.

In the handling of clay, the themes are still more or less the same as in the Kulli and Zhob cultures. The techniques of putting on separate pellets for eyes and mouth and the pressing down in pinching up of the clay, in order to mould the form, are still resorted to. The breasts and the pudenda are also in the form of pellets applied after modelling the main figure. The head-dress and ornaments are more elaborate than in the earlier Baluchistan phase. A fan-like head-dress appears, emerging from the back of the head and spreading on to the forehead. The jewellery is heavier, apart from the neck collars and chains and armlets and bangles and earrings. Anklets appear. The figurines are naked, but a short girdle round the waist seems to be fastened with a clasp, or wound several times around the hips. The figures are not flat-bottomed, but total figures with legs and hands. The hands are shown in movement and not merely hanging down.

In this civilisation, the male figurines appear, with arms on, or around the knees, or folded in devotion ahead.

The Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro cultures improve on the skill of the Kulli and Zhob cultures.

The themes are similar.

Similar figurines from the Zhob culture.

Plastic qualities.

The humped bull survives from the Kulli and Zhob cultures, but is already stylised, though still exuding power. The monkey, the goat, the ram, the elephant, the pig, the rhinoceros and the buffalo, appear in the animal representations.

Higher skill.

The plastic situation is sometimes highly complicated, as in the figure of a monkey from Harappa shown climbing a tree. The treatment of the hands and feet clasping the branch, the incision of the hair and the raised tail, with the curved end obviously required higher skill than shown. The rough and ready rhinoceros figure is sometimes shown with wrinkled hide, clearly executed by cutting and pinching and applique techniques. The birds and reptiles indicate mobility.

The children's toys have also improved in ingenuity. The animal with movable head, and the monkeys shown with perforations for sliding round a stick, and the toy carts, show extremely skilful handling. In fact, the toy cart was to survive as a model for all later terracottas in India. The bird chariot, which appears in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, was to reappear many hundred years later in north Bihar, as well as in the Gupta finds in north and central India and in China of the Han period. Some of the animal figures are hollow and were probably made with an inner stuffing of straw, which was fired out, leaving the hollow to serve as a whistle.

Influence of folk culture persists on the urban complexes.

There is some recognisable influence on the humped bull of the folk culture of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The stone and bronze images of this civilisation have a more finished plastic expression, patronised by a richer patron class. And one new feature appears in the torso in red stone as well as in the dancing figure in the dark grey slate at Harappa—the protuberant belly, lovingly carved in rhythmic lines. The gliding line of the limbs of these figures follows from the curvaceous treatment and was to make itself felt throughout the history of Indian sculpture.

The seals and the symbols of the Shiva figure with Trisula, the three-headed figure, and the animals, show that the folk base was fairly strong. Dr. Stella Kramrisch has summed up the influence of the plastic situation in this early art on the later developments in Indian sculpture. We quote her words here, because the ethos of the great ancient and mediaeval tradition has been traced by this sensitive interpreter with instinctive awareness of the transformation of form from the earlier beginnings to later times.

'Other devices on the seals, sealing and on terracottas are also relevant, if as motifs only, for the future, the centrifugal combination of

various figures on their parts diverging from one centre, the many-headed divinity and the standing figures with long arms, so that they touch the knees, the overhigh heads of goddesses which anticipates the Ushnisha, i.e. the excrescence on the head of Buddha images; the mode of sitting; the part played by the naga (serpent) and the alignment of repeated figures, as well as the freely symmetrical arrangement of single figures on the surface of the relief.'

5

There are some words from Ur of the third dynasty which apply to the conquest by the charioteers of the headlands of mother India:

'A host whose onslaught was like a hurricane, a people who had never known a city'. (Quoted by Piggot, *Prehistoric India*, Penguins).

The sky was shaken by their war cries. The tools of war were new and terrible. The fine horses carried the fast chariots. The marginal peoples, possessed of a high type of military organisation, spread out. The new heroism was sung in a sonorous language.

The priestly oligarchies seem to have put into power the members of the second highest caste, the Militant Kshatriyas. And the 'coercive mechanism' of an authoritarian state seems to have held power.

As always, however, the local population did not give up its beliefs. The fact that they were mostly quarantined outside the village, or township, made for the continuity of their traditional life. People generally refurbish their dying faith if only to resist imposition of alien outlooks.

In fact, the atmosphere of the forests, replete with brooding fears, seemed to creep into the consciousness of the simple, naive, direct and ruthless oppressors.

The highly organised, well-knit and, for its time, flourishing civilisation of the proto-Dravidians, as the Mohenjo-Daro-Harappa complex seems to have been, was thus destroyed by the formidable waves of invaders from the north-west. The fortified cities were laid bare by a superior force in the name of the lusty, meat-eating, soma-drinking warrior God Indra.

The subjugated people, described in the Vedic hymns as Black Dasyus or the Vritras were reduced to the status of a depressed population.

The non-fighting camp followers of the Aryan tribes, the craftsmen who made chariots, or cut grass for the horses, or made weapons,

Plastic situation in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and its influence on later sculpture

The onslaught of the followers of God Indra.



Dialectic of struggle of the conquering and conquered cultures.

were probably also a depressed section of the conquering hordes. The heroes were adept at racing in fast chariots, hunting, playing dice, sometimes attending sacrifices performed by the priests. But later they became involved in the onerous chain of cause and effect, facing the injustice of the ordinary life. In *Rig Veda* (X, 112) there is a picture of the Aryan-Dasyus scene during the time when the vengeance of the earth had wreaked itself sufficiently to make the people human in their strengths and frailties:

Flow Indu, flow for Indra's sake:

We have various hopes and plans
and many are the ways of men:
The craftsmen seek for jobs to do,
the priest his flock, the leech the sick.

Flow Indu, flow for Indra's sake:

The arrowsmith with hard dry reeds
and feathers from the airy birds,
Bronze for the tips, and glowing coals,
seeks out the man who'll pay him best.

Flow Indu, flow for Indra's sake:

I am a poet, dad's a leech,
and mother grinds corn on the quern,
As cows go following, one on one,
We all seek wealth in different ways.

Flow Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

The outer signs of the earlier cultures may have vanished, but the interior civilisation of the dark peoples had a long-range effect on the conquerors.

There are references in the earlier portion of the *Rig Veda* to a kind of civil war between the Sudas and the 'Ten Kings'. And it seems that the non-fighting elements among the victors came to be despised, along with the mass of the indigenous people. The less heroic Aryans may have intermarried with the Dasyus. At any rate, *Varna* or colour became the first criterion for the discrimination between the high and the low.

'Superior',
The Aryans
accept the
Mother Image
from the
'black Dasyus.'

In spite of the authoritarianism at the top, therefore, the matriarchal system of the Dasyus seems to have continued. And the Mother seems to have entered the awareness of the upper hierarchies in terms of Mother Earth, as witness the funeral hymn in the *Rig Veda* (X, 18):

'Betake thee to the lap of the Earth
the Mother,
of Earth far-spreading, very kind and
gracious

Young dame, wool-soft unto the guerdon
given,
may she preserve thee from destruction's
bosom.

Heave thyself, Earth, nor press thee down-
wards heavily;

afford him cosy access, gently tending him,

Cover him, as a mother wraps her skirt about
her child, O Earth.'

The earth may have been shaken by the wheels of the chariots, but ultimately asserted itself, and its seasons, its peculiar flora and fauna, its texture absorbed the newcomers. Those who depended on the gods in the sky and wanted to fly vertically away, had to accept the revenge of the people who lived close to the horizontal earth. A later hymn in the *Rig Veda* (X, 108) has a dialogue between Panis and Sarama. This Sarama seems to be a Bitch-Goddess, sent down by Indra to track down some missing cattle.

The promoters of a new order seem to have ended up, in spite of their pious references to the Gods, mostly as commoners, given to the mundane secular life,

'The horse likes a light-laden cart,
gay hosts attract the laugh and jest:
Man longs for woman, natural as
the parched frogs long for the rains.'

The conquerors have succumbed to the routine. The subliminal desires have come to the surface. The stirrings are from the heart. The elemental urges of the people have prospered. The dreams of the men and women of the earth begin to be shaped in clay again.

The continuity of folk culture seems thus to have been sustained. The hymns of praise to the mighty destroyer God Indra, 'All outstripping chariot wheel, Oh! Indra, thou,' even began to be forgotten.

In the later Vedas we thus get an amalgam of chants, hymns, and prayers to gods, magic spells, popular songs full of the urge for alliance with nature, of vertical aspirations to the divinities, childlike fear, vulgar abuse and obscure conundrums. The culture concerned with sound, with the willed extroversion, of inner deep resonance, slowly gave place to the worship of the new symbolism taken from the culture of the despised. The conquerors refer to the 'struggle against ordinances followed by the servile people'. They refer to the phallus worship. They deplore the fact that the local people do not indulge in the Aryan animal sacrifices. They still refer to them as noseless men and women of black complexion and unintelligible speech. But soon the myths of the dark god destroying the demon dragon underneath the Jumna appear in common parlance.

**Amalgamation
of deities and
forms in the
Vedic period.**

The Aryans are known to have constructed stupas, a kind of hemispherical tomb 'the narrow home of clay' (*Rig Veda* 10, 18, 10-13, VII 89). These Vedic tombs being of perishable materials have all been destroyed. But some caves excavated in Pudinyattamori, by an Englishman called Logan, show the family cemetery as a kind of geometrical plan. The emphasis on the shraddha ceremony suggests that the narrow 'house made with clay', where the Brahmins burnt a fire day-and-night, and where they appeased the dead spirits with *soma*, did not require the aid of the hand-made household goods in the simple and pure worship. No idols of the Vedic gods have been discovered and there is no iconography.

6

Some centuries later, large stone earthy figure sculptures of a fundamental, heavy and massive character appear, as well as terracottas.

The continuity of the folk tradition.

The clay figure folk tradition of the Dasyus seems to have been passed on, in spite of the Aryan taboo against the representation of the gods, into images.

Mauryan Terracottas.

The basic character of the Mauryan terracottas does not differ from the Indus Valley figurines. There is greater elaboration of jewellery, clothes and proliferation of forms to include tree spirits, fawns, dryads and nymphs, symptomatic of habitual assimilation by people, through animistic predilection, of everything they could find useful for daily life.

The social stratification of the caste system, against which the Buddha had struggled in the sixth century B.C., seems to have survived under Chandragupta Maurya, who rallied northern India against the previous Greek occupation and enthroned himself in the third century B.C.

In spite of the sharp division of castes, the strong bureaucracy, under the central leadership of the king, asserted itself, and created a state modelled almost on the Harappa tradition. And, underneath the shadow of protection of the Imperial court, there seemed to emerge a busy sub-urban life, on the surplus of agriculture, cattle and sheep farming, and craftsmanship in metallurgy, textiles, bricks, pots and pans, and trade in beads, silver, gold, lapis lazuli and dry fruit. The essential feature is still the village society, fragmented by caste, but productive, through the division of labour, of good life for the few, when the rains came, allowing the top oligarchies to flourish on a grandiose imported culture.

Under Ashoka Maurya, the empire became even more highly organised, both as a military force and as a civil bureaucracy, opened up

trade routes, and, after much conquest, gave intellectual content to Alexander's dream of a universal kingdom, based on Buddhist non-fighting quietism, tolerance and goodwill.

There is much difficulty in ascribing the terracottas of the Mauryan period. A few identifiable figures have been discovered from the evidence of diggings of various strata of the earth at a number of places.

The similarity of features, from the earliest times downwards, has led to a rough division by Dr. Kramrisch of these clay objects into 'ageless' and 'time bound' groups. The main distinction seems to be based on the fact that, apart from similarities, the 'ageless' are made by hand and the 'time bound' have involved the mould.

The mother goddess appears throughout the 'ageless' groups, treated expressionistically, by flattening, rounding, pinching up and pressing down of the soft clay with the fingers, and then the application of eyes, ears, lips, pudenda, hair with strips, pellets and scratches.

The forms tend to take cylindrical, conical, ovoid and other geometrical shapes. The animal figures of the previous periods, horses and elephants, recur. Maybe, the Aryan value for the horse and the elephant as *Vahana* had left its impress on the terracotta art.

The 'ageless' type made entirely by hand, seems to have been widespread all over northern India. They have been found at Taxilla, Mathura, Sravasti, Ahichchatra in Punjab, Kausambi, Rajghat in Uttar Pradesh, Pawaya in Madhya Pradesh, Pataliputra, Buxar and Vaisali in Bihar, Tamluk, Mahestan and Bangarh in Bengal. The recent excavations have yielded terracottas at Ter in the Deccan. Of the 'time bound' group, Dr. Kramrisch distinguishes the following types: those from Patna, Buxar and Mathura respectively, and variations of the types from these sites.

The distinctive qualities of the historical images are that they are impressed from moulds. The ears, the hair and the head-dress, are added on separately. The applique technique seems to be common to both the 'ageless' and the 'time bound' terracottas. But the additive technique is employed mostly in the 'time bound'.

Of the few surviving complete figures, some have been noticed for their remarkable workmanship.

Two of these are female figurines, one in the Prince of Wales Museum, complete, except

Dr. Kramrisch's distinction of 'Ageless and Time bound' Terracottas.



for the absent hands; second in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, also complete, except for the lower portion of the right leg and left hand. They are both similar in technique. The frontal aspect is shown, on flattened planes. The fertility aspect is emphasised with enlarged pelvis and full breasts.

Female figurine in P.O.W. Museum.

The one in the Prince of Wales Museum is heavily overburdened with jewellery, beaded discs of ornaments, with tassels hanging down from the head; big earrings suspended from each ear. The neck is adorned with a heavy collar. There are strips of ornaments or drapery on the torso. There are heavy girdles round the hips and anklets, on rather stumpy legs. The head seems to have been made from a mould, with the big open eyes, near-snub nose and wide mouth, with heavy lower lips. The body is modelled by the hand, but the ornaments were obviously applied separately. Dr. Kramrisch ascribes the Prince of Wales Museum figure to 200 B.C. (Fig. 30, p. 16).

Female figurine in Boston Museum.

The figure in the Boston Museum is adorned with fewer ornaments. The handling is more refined, the rougher legs and the conical hands with unmarked fingers seem exaggerated in contrast to the sensitive lines of the torso.

Dr. Coomaraswamy compared this figure to the one engraved in the gold plaque from Lauria Nandagarh and thought it to be pre-Mauryan.

Of the terracotta figurines discovered in Pataliputra, a few have been found from the site of Bulandi Bagh, which stands on the ancient wooden rampart of the Mauryan capital.

Terracotta figurines from Bulandi Bagh, Patna.

One of these is the standing female figure, with two separate heads and another one is similar, though with one head. Both these figures are in the round, though with frontal treatment. The faces are from moulds, while the figures seem to be modelled by the hands. The first one has been put together from separate parts and has an enormous array of clothes with skirts flowing on the sides. The head is decorated with a splendid head-dress of many parts. Prof. Saraswati seems to see the attitude of dance in the position of hands. The plastic handling is superb (Fig. 10, p. 41).

The other figure from Bulandi Bagh is simpler, subtler and more sensitive in the modelling, with a nearly diaphanous covering and fine elongated limbs (Fig. 11, p. 41).

There are two heads, also discovered at Bulandi Bagh. One of these has a bicornated head-dress and seems feminine. The second, the head of a boy, has a broad open face, with a radiant expression, described by Coomaraswamy as 'one of the most sensitive and skilful production of Indian art of any period' (Fig. 48, p. 20).

Mr. Jayaswal discovered from Bhikna Phari near Patna, a seated yogi with ornaments of beads, the Urdhva Linga and a snake hood over the head. The discoverer thought it to be pre-Maurya, though Prof. Saraswati is inclined to date it to the Maurya period from the treatment of expression.

Seated figure from Bhikna Phari near Patna.

There are two other vase-shaped male figurines from Bhikna Phari, which seem distinctively Mauryan, in so far as they accord to Prof. Saraswati's defines of these shapes, as possessing high degree, of 'individualised expression.'

Female head from Golakhpur near Patna.

A female head from Bhikna Phari, and a male head from Golakhpur, show feeling for volume. The female head is a study in the brooding pensiveness of a young woman. The maid in imbued with sadness and the drooping eyelids shows a Buddhist calm (Figs. 42, 43, p. 19).

There is a fine torso of a female figurine, conceived as a cylindrical body, with full breasts and heavy hips wearing ornaments and draperies. This is modelled almost as an ivory carving of a full-bosomed young woman, with sensuous appeal that was to characterise women in later Mithuna sculptures. The ornaments have been applied after the modelling of the body. The garment with the tassels, half dhoti, half frock, is held together by a jewelled girdle. Dr. Kramrisch has allied this figure to the Didarganj Yakshini, though Prof. Saraswati considers it to be earlier. Mr. Jayaswal assigned it to the Maurya period. It seems likely that the high-skilled craftsman who made this figure was from a capital city than from the village, a person who had felt the impact of Greek fashions (Fig. 41, p. 19).

Another female figurine similar to Didarganj Yakshini.

Some other terracottas with modelled bodies, moulded faces and ornaments in the applique technique, have been ascribed to the Maurya period. But Prof. Saraswati considers them to be of the later Sunga period because of the 'delicate touches in their facial treatment'. One of these is the figurine from Baxur in Bihar.

Figurine from Baxur, Bihar.

There are two heads, one female, one male, from Kausambi and Mathura respectively, of the indeterminate period (Figs. 44, 45, p. 20).

Of the other significant finds of the Mauryan period—one is from Tamluk from Midnapore district, Bengal. The face of this figure has been impressed by mould and then fixed to the modelled body. The right hand falls along the curve, parallel to the drapery, the left arm is akimbo. The skirt, held by the bend and the scarf, as well as the ornaments, are the in applique technique. The figure is finely modelled in volumes, with soft shadows and delicate lines, as against the primitivism of the applique,

Mauryan Terracotta from Tamluk, Bengal.

draperies and jewellery. Prof. Saraswati sees an affinity between this figure and the two female figurines from Bulandi Bagh.

Figurine from Pokharne, Bengal.

The second figurine is from Pokharne in Bankura District, Bengal. This is similar to the Tamluk piece, though, not so well executed. One of the most important figurines which Prof. Saraswati ascribes to Tamluk is an elaborately adorned modelled relief figurine, carried out with extraordinary care for detail. The face is round like the moon, the foliage is also circular, and the tapering heavy arms, breasts and hips, are treated as soft volumes. The elaborate jewellery, the strange turban, with emblems and the flowers in the background all add to the richness of delineation. The pudenda, though not emphasised, is clearly marked. There has been some controversy about its find spot and much evidence has been adduced to relate it to the Uttar Pradesh finds of the mother goddess figures. This view is confirmed by Prof. Johnston, who definitely calls it the 'image of the mother goddess'. The cult had obviously survived in the whole Ganges Valley, in the centuries before Christ and was the fundamental worship of the folk away from the imperial capitals. The goddess Maya is certainly mentioned by the poet Ashvagosha in his *Savdarananda Kavya*, as also in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus No. 1280, where the 'goddess Meia' is said to have brought floods in the Ganges (Fig. 35, p. 18).

This terracotta was, indeed, to set a style of clothes and jewellery for most of the primitive population of India of the later periods.

7

Of the Sunga terracottas, Kausambi has been one of the most rewarding sites.

A typical example is the relief figurine of a dancer. The careful detail in regard to jewellery, coiffeur and clothes, shows intense pre-occupation with the worldly life. The diaphanous drapery is so delicately treated, with incisions which heighten the sensuousness. The modelling of the body, even in so small a space, is able to bring out the dominant charm of the dancer, with the full breasts, the smile on the face and the mobility in the figure.

There is a rare image of a winged goddess from ancient Vaisali. She stands facing a lotus and also surrounded on both sides by lotus buds and blossoms. The wings rise on the shoulders above the arms which are akimbo. The figure wears heavy ornaments and is in

the romantic mood. Coomaraswamy considered it to be a Maurya piece, while Prof. Saraswati regards it as of the Sunga period (Fig. 52, p. 21). There is a similar fragment of the winged goddess in a fragment found at Vaisali related to a bronze specimen from Akunderi and a stone relief from Mathura.

The terracotta mould for the male winged figure, obviously a counterpart of the female, now in the Ashutosh Museum, in Calcutta University, was found at Tamluk (Fig. 36, p. 18).

8

The atmosphere of village life did not change to any extent when the Sakas and Kushans infiltrated into the whole of the northern landscape. These barbarians also gazed from their high horses at the people. But the resonances of the deep forests, the prayers, and the brooding fears, began to possess them as soon as they alighted, and walked across the high roads of conquest, to live among the trees, the shrubs and the plentiful harvests, by the big and small rivers. The confluence of impulse and idea and image began to transcend the faith of the Buddha, which the conquerors accepted. The upper strata looked for sustenance to the lower strata, through a religion which seems to have accepted the animism of the people—that there is a spirit behind everything. The instinctive life, as always, crept into the crevices of thought, making for extreme emotions, as against the middle way of the 'Enlightened One'.

The new fervour for grace and tenderness, resurrected the mother worship, through the worship of Queen Maya, the mother of the Buddha.

Apart from the craftsmen who worked for the Imperial court, specially at Peshawar, Taxila and Mathura, many of the workers in clay provided images for the pilgrims to the stupas, for the itinerant visitors to carry away. Desire, dark thought, dim apprehension, and awareness of moods in the figures, was to awaken men and women from the sloth and lethargy and acceptance of the world, to spiritual insight, contemplation and firm resolution, to be free of the world by confronting the world.

The cities of Mathura and Taxila were almost cities of gold, where the change of administration, the opening of trade routes had brought a new manifestation of creative energy. The waves of awakening spread to Ahichchatra, Kausambi, Bhita, Rajghat, Vaisali and further.

Saka and Kushan invaders.

Mother Goddess.

Sunga Terracottas from Kausambi.

Winged Goddess from Vaisali.



**The Kushan
hermaphrodite
from Rajghat.**

Among the finds of the Kushan period, there are quite a few models which show happiness on the earth as an experience reflecting the naive pleasure at being alive. The radiant smile on the face of the head from Mathura is an exquisite rounded piece. The treatment of the hair shows that the evanescent moods are part of the upward evolution.

**Terracotta
plaque from
Bangarh.**

The hermaphrodite on the terracotta plaque from Rajghat, with an animal on the side, reveals the ambivalent sensuality of the figure through the volumes of the belly and the full breasts, as well as the diminutive phallus. The extent to which the Indian craftsman could come close to reality, and then withdraw to see the miracles of life is indicated here.

In the terracotta plaque from Bangarh, the figurine is almost lifted from the clay modelling to a study for relief sculpture. The similarity of the lyrical folds of the dhoti, the slight hand of the torso, and the whole treatment, suggest the kind of charm that had already entered stone sculpture.

9

There might have been a tremendous release of energy in the craftsmen, because of the plentiful employment that was now available in the building of the shrines of the Hindu and the Buddhist faiths. The opening of the safe roads which the Kushans left to the Guptas, and flow of gold from the west, made the first few centuries after Christ almost golden. The ascetic rejection of things of the earlier periods, recommended by holy men, gave place to the acceptance of everything in life. After having secured most of what a man needs, he plumbs the depths from felt experience, beyond ritual, and seeks to transform his humanity by insights, such as are frequent in the poetry of Kalidasa. The heart-piercing sorrows of human love, the messages of separated beings in search of each other, carried by the cloud messenger, even the flight to Indra's heaven of Dushyant and Sakuntala, show that the physical senses are being transformed into mediums of awakening. The upper hierarchies are venturing into new quests. They find that the lower peoples have already shown the way by bringing vitalities to their fundamental confrontation of the elements.

The exaltation of the moulded terracottas, from their status of small figurines in the village, to large-sized modelled plaques in north of Bikaner, had already impressed the rich patrons. The virtuosity of the Rang Mahal terracottas communicates the possibility of

the medium as sculpture, with pleasing volumes and fine warm finish (Figs. 75-81, pp. 28, 29).

In the lybrinths of the tangled woods of Uttar Pradesh, the landed gentry discovered the use of terracotta plaques for the brick temple at Bhitargaon. All the four sides of this unique structure were crammed with the experiences of the earth, and the upper worlds, with an opulence that makes the onlooker stand still in wonder at the mastery which has now been gained in this art.

The plaque of Ganesha running away with the ladoos from the greedy brother Kartakaya is one of the liveliest dramas enacted by the hand of man. The play of the two children has been informed with a mischief, that is the very mischief of life. The agitation of the figures shows how the people noticed rhythm in mundane experience (Fig. 82, p. 30).

This humanist strain was to continue underneath the flow of words of the neo-Brahmins always. The myths were reabsorbed into everyday life by the new generations. The fingers moved incessantly to renew life. The death brought by the demons of darkness, the white Huns, the Jats and other conquerors, could not wipe out the villages, which scattered away to reassemble and continue the life process. Even at his most indigent, man needed images of the tremors in his body with which he could rise into himself and transform the earth stuff into the fire stuff.

The advantage of a study of the popular terracotta art of India for us may be this: We might question the generally held view, encouraged by Coomaraswamy and the transcendental egotists, that the only Indian art is the classical art of the temples, where images were merely put as handmaids of religion, the illustrations of spirituality, and made for ritual. Because clay images, and even the bigger sculptures, that arose from them, or as parallel to them, are mostly material objects, made the earth earthy, the stone stony, and the bronze bronzy. And their value lies in the transformation of natural elements by the sensitive craftsmen into forms which have the 'quick' of life in them. Perhaps it is likely that, more and more, we will begin to recognise that the bulk of our people were materialists, who, like historical man everywhere, were part of nature, trying to ally themselves with it, from the position of isolation in the midst of the vaster and more frightening realities. This alliance was attained by the body-soul in a kind of tension of making things, through which the very intensity of creativeness imbued objects with stress. In this way, creative experience became a kind of naive religious or spiritual experience.

**Bhitargaon
moulded
Terracottas.**

**Transcendental
egotism
versus
humanism.**

**The
Humanistic
acceptance of
the life process
in the Gupta
period.**

**Rang Mahal
Terracottas.**



The makers of these images were seldom high-minded idealistic priests, who remained separate from the men bound in the Kama-loka. They were low-caste craftsmen, whose spirit seems to see the 'quick' in laughter, through exaggeration of parts of a figure, in the smile of a child, in splendidous clothes, in animal movements. The active will is both the conscious maker of things and the witness of the bubbling movement of life in the created object—the life sweat. As the body becomes even dimly aware of imparting its private vicissitudes, or pleasures, or sheer skill, to an image, it became a spirit which has allied itself, through total absorption in the making of the figure, and which thus releases itself to

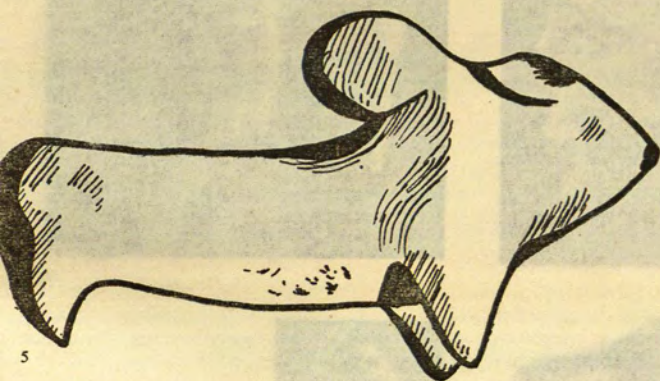
awareness of its potential, to the understanding of it, to the tasting of the flavour itself.

The soul of even the primitive man defines its instinctive realisations in organic bodily images. The tragic confusion of nature has to be mastered. The elements have to be recreated and informed of the vitalities. In this way, nature is better seen and understood. Also, beauty is born, right in the mud of the potter's yard. The creative art of the people is the humbler gift of the toymaker who surrenders his own, and other people's follies, apprehensions, and awareness through kinetic images to his intuitive handling of clay in forms.

—MULK RAJ ANAND



PORTFOLIO



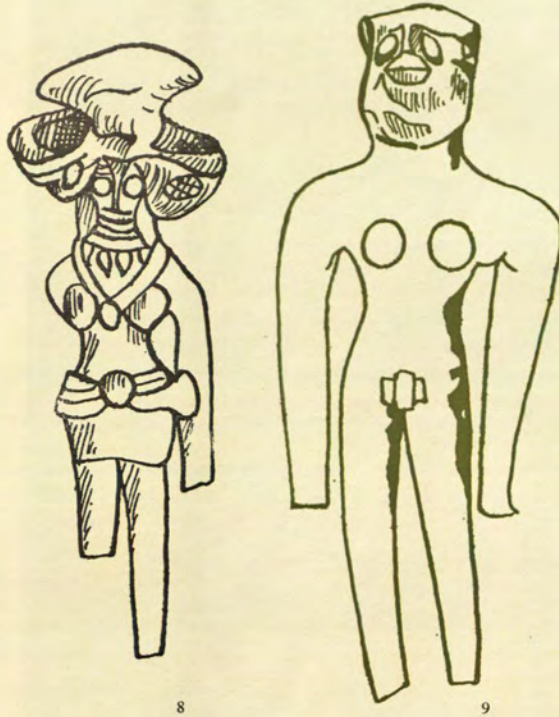
Kulli and Zoab



Mohenjodaro and Harappa



10



8

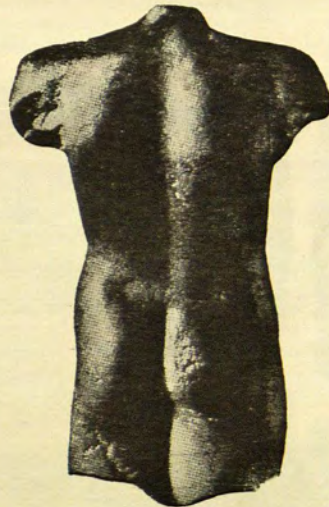
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Pre-Mauryan

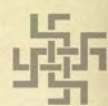
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21



22



Kulli and Zhob, Figs. 1-7

The primitivism of Kulli and Zhob terracottas suggests an earthy sensuousness, of which the aesthetic value is in the power of the image as magical totem.

The small pellet eye stuck on the face of the images (Figs. 1, 3) the heavy jewellery, and the massive neck, indicate a fear figure.

The big breasts and the slender waist of the two female figures with the subtle band under the arms, which are akimbo, seem to anticipate a mature tradition of modelling.

The force of the humped bulls with the painted stripes (Figs. 6, 7) is almost leonine and symptomatic of power, with big horns, and the pipal tree stuck in the middle, shows a stylisation of slender images. They seem to have correspondences with similar figures from Sumeria, the older Mesopotamia.

The pellet eyes of the Zhob female figurines are bigger and more awesome than those of the Kulli culture. The torso is heavier with enlarged breasts. The figurine is obviously for appeasement of a dread goddess. (Fig. 1)

Mohenjodaro and Harappa, Figs. 8-14

The female terracotta figurine in Mohenjodaro (Fig. 8) seems to have attained sophistication beyond the Kulli and Zhob cultures. The pellet eyes, breasts and jewellery, are almost naturalistic. The head-dress is elaborate. The forms of the torso, legs and arms, are slenderer and more supple in the modelling. If it is the mother goddess, it is in her more beneficent mood, symptomatic of a richer civilisation, where cults have been established.

Fig. 9.

The male terracotta figurine, with the enormous hulk of the face, is offset by the shapely waist and legs and the flowing arms. The fig leaf is obviously fixed in order to impart urban dignity to a folk image.

Fig. 10.

The elasticity of the bronze dancer imparts a grace to the bend of the waist and the hips. The flow of the left arm improves on the rather static popular terracotta figurine of popular workmanship of the same civilisation.

Figs. 12, 13

The curvacious lines, which were incipient in the Mohenjodaro seals and the bronze dancer, achieve curves and volumes in the two nude statuettes from Harappa. The carving of these stone figures has been lovingly done. The soft, gliding movement, both at the front and the back of the male torso, is brought out with great sensitiveness to form. This rhythmic approach was to become the search for grace and harmony in the later art of India. The mobility of the second dancing figure, with its exquisite bend, full hips, breasts and shoulders, was to establish the tradition for flow in the figure in Indian plastic art.

The animal figurines from Mohenjodaro inherit the suggestion of power as in the Kulli bulls.

Fig. 14.

The steatite seal with figure of bull from Mohanjodaro, already shows the capacity of relief carving in modulated curves, with gentle, undulating lines and clear draftsmanship. The elaborate dewlap and the bent horns show stylisation. The treatment of plastic form, both in modelling and carving, seems to have attained a sophisticated finish beyond the primitivist sensuousness of the Kulli and Zhob cultures.

Fig. 14a

The linear rhythm in these seals suggests highly advanced skill in composition.

Fig. 14b

The flame-like aureole of leaves already suggests the flame-like aura of the later gods.

The drama of the bent figure before the god, with trisula on the head and the stylised lion behind, with seven devotees standing in a row, at the base, all suggest a worship scene, with remarkable grace.

The elastic bend of the female figure between the tree and the animal is dramatised into movement in supple curves and suggests a sacred rite.

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy has summed up the general characteristics of the Mohenjodaro Harrappa terracottas in the following manner:

1. *The nose is prominent, and formed by pinching the clay together, so that it forms a projection continuous with the forehead.*
2. *The eyes are large and round, and separately affixed.*
3. *The lips are thick and separately affixed.*
4. *Earrings are worn but are not very large.*
5. *In some cases there is a choker-like necklace.*
6. *The female figures wear a broad girdle, but are otherwise nude.*
7. *The navel is generally indicated.*
8. *The mount of Venus is not conspicuous.*
9. *The breasts are not large, but are separately affixed.*
10. *There are three kinds of head-dresses: fanshaped; or*
11. *with projections like horns,*
12. *which in one case are spirally twisted, forming a volute.*
13. *The arms are held at the sides,*
14. *as in one example, raised to the head,*
15. *or as in another, the left arm is bent to support a child at the breast.*

“Excavations carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India at Rupar, Lothal, Nevasa, Nagda, Ujjain, Alamgirpur etc. have led to conclusive evidence that the so-called Indus valley culture of the chalcolithic period was not confined to the Indus basin alone but spread over a much wider area in Western, Central and Northern India. Did the Harappa culture reach the lower Ganga valley as well? Certain unique and enigmatic terracotta seals may perhaps provide an answer to this ticklish question. One of the tablets shown here (Fig. 15), recovered from Harinarayanpur, on the bank of the Hooghly estuary, round in shape, contains two abstract figures, confronting each other, against a plain background. Both of them are beak-headed, crowned with twigs like some of the Harappan seal types. Both the figures, almost linear in character but full of primitive vigours, have their legs in forward movement, the bigger one apparently a divinity of superior status bestowing a staff like thing to the smaller one opposite. The other eye-shaped tablet (Fig. 16) from Chandraketugarh recalling similar archaic types shows a technique different from its counterpart. Instead of linear abstraction in verticality we find the hollow inset occupied by three standing figures, one male and a pair of skirted females who face him; voluminous, soft and rounded. All the three figures, shaven-headed, hook-nosed, lower portion of the bodies covered by kilted drapery are strangely Harappan in character. Associated finds from Harinarayanpur, pottery fragments with geometrical patterns and clay seals with figures of deer in relief point to unmistakable Jhukar and Jhangar culture characteristic. Therefore this remarkable pair of seals appear to be post-Harappan in character and may be plausibly placed in the second millennium B.C.”

—D.P.G.

Proto-Historic, Fig. 17

Dr. A. Bannerji Shastri has described certain remains of proto-historic terracotta remains in Gangetic Valley. Among these, he draws attention to this female figure with ‘an intriguing smile, with its strange far-off look and disturbing loveliness’. In red clay, this archaic specimen has an elegance rather remarkable for the 3rd or 2nd millennium B. C. There are no additions here. The whole figure has been modelled. The eyelids droop, heavy earrings are worn, the face seems to have been pressed in a mould in relief. There are quite a few figures of this type from Buxar in Bihar.

“The earliest examples of Rajasthan’s terracottas are the terracotta figurines from Kalibangan in the Ghaggar valley, from where burnt bricks decorated with carved or moulded band ornaments and trellis work are found occasionally, Seals, made of steatite with some inscription and, often, an animal figure on one side and a perforated knob on the other, were revealed from this site as a result of excavation. Impressions of such seals on clay

have also been brought to light. These seals are both fired and otherwise, and appear to have had, on the opposite side, impressions on reeds and knotted twine. The available evidence indicates that the seals were used for stamping packages, evidently containing commodities of trade. Terracotta figurines of animals (Fig. 18), birds and human beings, of which a human head is reminiscent of a similar specimen from Mohenjodaro; bangles of terracotta and gamesmen of terracotta are the finds, typical of the Harappan culture."

—S.P.S.

Fig. 19

The two examples from the Peshawar District afford the link between the Harappan terracottas and the later Indian workmanship. The nose is still prominent and made by pinching the clay together in continuation of the forehead, as in the Harappan type. Unlike the Harappan eyes, these are now narrow and have two lids fixed on top of them. The lips are fixed as in the earlier centuries. The mouth is small and almost suppressed. The figures wear earrings. The hair hangs down in braids on the shoulders by the ears. There are four necklaces. The breasts are small and fixed as in Harappa. The navel is absent. The girdle is indicated. The pudenda is clear but not emphasised. The legs are together parted by an incised line. Anklets are shown. Arms are extended in horizontal position without hand in abstract points. The head-dress is tilted on one side. The rosette is fixed separately. A big piece of round jewellery is suspended from a double chain, perforated in the middle, with two similar bosses near the shoulders. Two pieces from Taxila, reproduced by Coomaraswamy in his famous article on Archaic Indian Terracottas, are similar, though not distinctly so.

Pre-Mauryan, Fig. 20

Dr. Coomaraswamy considers this small remnant in light grey clay, from Mathura, in the Boston Museum collection similar to the two Peshawar specimens. The nose is indeed pinched. The eyes are incised, but in diamond shapes, showing pupils. The mouth is an old woman's toothless depression. The breasts are more prominent than in the Peshawar specimens. The jewellery is not fixed, but raised in relief from the torso, a feature which is to be seen in all pre-Mauryan terracottas. Ostensibly, the mother goddess motif is reappearing in this incarnation.

Fig. 21

This other light grey terracotta from Mathura is similar to the previous one in the Boston Museum, except for the heavy earrings, which appear on the left side of the face. The significance of the punched circles is not clear, but the magical idea of the image may have changed slightly in this configuration.

Later Pre-Mauryan, Figs. 22, 23

The figurines are tending to become relief sculptures. The face and the elaborate head-dress of Fig. 23, is flat at the back. The head-dress in Fig. 22 is elaborate with rosettes.

There are two kinds of faces in this group: The oval type is the lovely big-eyed wide-mouthed full-breasted highly sensuous figurine, Fig. 22. The

Later Pre-Mauryan



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rounded type is shown in the broad-faced specimens. The later open-faced type were to be seen again in Maurya and Sunga reliefs. These terracottas are in hard clay in darkish glaze. Coomaraswamy suggests that the group dates from anywhere between 1000 to 300 B. C.

Mithunas, Figs 24, 25, 26, 27

These figures evidence to the man-woman embrace, which was the accepted fable of desire as the cause of procreation. Originally, the One had split himself into two and the two desire to be One. This is the source of creation and the interplay of their connection embodied here, in cult figurines, was to reappear throughout the centuries as the play function of the Mithuna pairs in which He unites with She.

Fig. 28

The Mithuna male and female from the National Museum attributed to 2nd century, combines the characteristics of the broad-faced male and female figures of the pre-Mauryan terracottas. The configurations are incised with deep lines, as in later relief sculpture. The plastic form is sought to be created from within the material rather than in imposed pinchings and affixation of clay.

Fig. 29

"Few year's ago archaeological excavations at Chandraketugarh, conducted by the Asutosh Museum, have brought to light a significant terracotta snake goddess. Having a long banded neck crowned by a tapering hood and broad middle part stamped with circles, a typical pre-Mauryan or Mauryan train, resting on two leg stumps, this figure clearly recalls similar figures from the Sone Valley, Hastinapur etc. and therefore one of the earliest excavated figure sculpture from Bengal so far."—D.P.G.

Fig. 30

The grey terracotta from Mathura of the mother goddess from the Prince of Wales Museum 3rd century B. C. seems to be in transition from the pre-Mauryan, Figs. 22, 31, 33. The concept of the great mother seems to have become imbedded in the craftsman's consciousness as a permanent image. The figurine, therefore, is moulded by hands unconsciously, as the outer plastic expression in concrete image of a primordial principle of the source of life. The rosettes, the heavy jewellery, and the incisions of the girdle on the heavy hips, are all emphasised dramatically in an expressionist manner to denote the exalted position of the personage who is more than woman—perhaps goddess.

Fig. 32

Again, the cult image of the great mother, holding a child, from the National Museum continues the tradition of the broad faced, heavy-limbed lady Figs. 22, 31, 33. The plastic form embodies fertility in rounded curves, voluptuous breasts and emphatic rosettes as in the head-dress of a queen. The primitive aesthetic is in the potential motherhood and its symbols.

Late Maurya and Sunga, Fig. 34

The late Maurya and Sunga terracottas, specially from Bihar are distinguished by the emergence of plastic forms which are modelled with a delicacy

that is symptomatic of the court interest in this art. The primitivism of feminine image with the planes of the body, seems to be a transition for the late Maurya towards the Sunga periods.

The refinement of the figure in this group in the modelling suggests that these terracotta images are not almost studies from sculpture. The simplification of the form, the avoidance of concrete detail of jewellery and the near polish may have been influenced by the more gigantic Mauryan sculptures. The models seem to be exalted people, as in this case, probably a dancer, with the supple limbs, the lovely serene face, the flowing skirt and the elaborate head-dress.

Mauryan, Fig. 35

There are different views about the identification of this unique terracotta figurine, with round face, elaborate head-dress, draperies and ornaments, found in eastern India, to be precise, in Tamluk, Mirzapur District, Bengal. Dr. Kramrisch describes this figure as the *apsara Panchachuda*, created at the churning of the ocean. Prof. Johnston compares the bandolier with amulets on this figure, which he has also found in several objects of votive significance in the Near East and on the basis of this, he relates the terracotta to the mother goddess cult. He refers to the goddess called *Maya* of *Ashvaghosha*, and relates this deity with the Indian mother goddess *Mira*, (in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* No. 1280) where she is invoked as bringing flood in the Ganges.

Fig. 36

"No less significant is the large terracotta mould of a standing winged *Yaksha* with his hands on the hip, evidently a Sunga work of great power, recovered from Tamluk strangely recalling a similar contemporary terracotta plaque from Basrah.

Fig. 37

"Another *Chandraketugarh* head of Sunga *Yakshini* is, however, unexcelled for its matchless delicacy and luxurious grandeur of details."—D.P.G.

Figs. 38-40

The type of figurine, with the broad grin on the mouth, large diamond shaped eyes, thick neck, can be traced to the broad-faced figures of the pre-Maurya group evolving into a demon incarnation from whose dread powers appeasement was sought in worship.

This dread deity is similar to the elongated head with bushy moustachios, deep socketed eyes, and pronounced grinning teeth, whom *Coomaraswamy* identifies as the later *Mudgarapani*. Similar to these demons is the male dread deity, Fig. 40. He holds a ram across his chest. The pagan worship of the guardian spirits is here indicated in early plastic forms, which were to evolve into stone sculpture of dwarfs and kindred spirits.

Fig. 41

The female torso from *Golakhpur*, ascribed by Prof. Saraswati to the Maurya period, approximates to the ideal Indian female in its proportion. The volumes of the heavy breasts, the large hips, and the narrow waist, are redolent of



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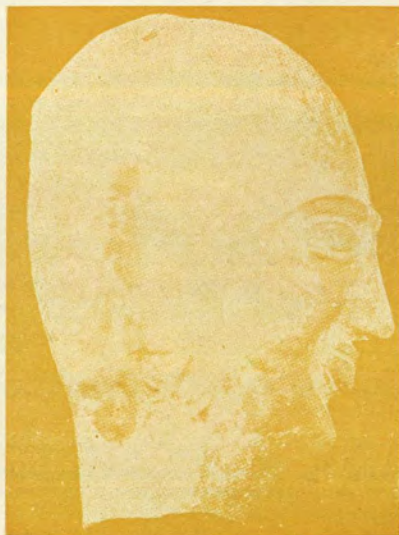
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the charm of the female with the emerging sensuality, the refulgence of dress and jewellery, to enhance the beauty as part of the household life. From the delicate flow of the upper part of the torso with the emphasised nipple points of the globular breasts and the curves of the hips, the soft overtures of the flesh through the delicately incised clothing, with the tassels and the floral relief of the girdles. This masterly piece is reminiscent almost of the aegean ideal of the woman from the mother goddess to Venus de Milo. In its plastic achievement of harmony it seems to anticipate the Didarganj Yakshini.

Figs. 42, 43

The two heads, one male from Golakhpur near Patna, Fig. 42, and the other female from Bhikhna Pahari, Fig. 43, which are ascribed to the Mauryan period, have assumed the attributes of mature sculpture. The male head, seemingly of a Buddhist monk with drooping eyelids, and a sad expression, seems to be portrait character study. The round-faced exuberant female head is sensuous in its appeal.

Maurya-Sunga, Figs. 44, 45

The female head from Kosam approximates to the type and has been ascribed to the Maurya Sunga period and shows the continuity of the oval face. The male head from Mathura continues the broad face tradition of the same period.

Figs. 46, 47

"Almost completely preserved, the Bangarh Yakshini fashioned after late Sunga idiom, vividly delineates feminine charm by its swaying gait, animated gesture and soft sensuous modelling. It is no doubt an alluring object of profound significance and universal appeal.

A unique toy-cart not found anywhere else in India envisaging Surya, heavily and compactly modelled in the round, flanked by a pair of dawn maidens, riding his chariot drawn by four horses, with the demon of darkness retreating below, presumably of the early 2nd century B. C. from Chandraketugarh, almost literally reproduced the contemporary stone relief from Bhaja in Western India. Numerous other toy-cart specimens of elephant, ram and horse, may lead one to the conclusion that as *Vahanas* they symbolise the Vedic trinity of Indra, Agni and Surya." —D.P.G.

Fig. 48

The two studies of children, one male and one female, of the Mauryan period from Pataliputra, are exquisitely modelled images.

The female head, with an elaborate hat, from the protuberant ends of which tassels seem to hang down, is in the tradition of the broad-faced females but shaped by sensitive fingers into a smiling, happy expressive child's head.

The second boy's head is the masterly terracotta, where the innocent happiness of childhood radiates from the broad volumes of the face. The total finish obviously relates it to the court art where portraiture may have been practised.

Fig. 49

To the same group belongs the female figurine from Pataliputra, with the elaborate head-dress and the extended skirt. The figure seems to be in a dance pose with the right hand extended forward. The masterly manipulation, with which the statuette has been built up, shows the highest advance yet made until that time in terracotta sculpture. The plastic situation has been seized with great skill for abstraction, exaggeration and for the delineation of drama.

The barbaric splendour of the dress, is however, fused with the graceful outlook which treats the figure as an undulating linear composition, dramatised with patches of raised surface relief. We have travelled a long way from the primaeval mother goddess of Mohenjodaro and the calm oval-faced figures of the Indian terracotta tradition.

Fig. 50

The type of female figure, with emphasised pudenda, which was to represent the mother principal, seems to have been current during the Maurya-Sunga periods, as is evident from the famous gold leaf plaque, found in Lauria Nandgarh. Some scholars have suggested that this is the image of the earth goddess, Prithvi. The arms are stretched straight downwards, the legs taper, separately, and not as in the Peshawar terracotta, the hands and feet are fairly marked, the head-dress is exalted, the breasts are rounded, the mound of Venus is highly emphasised.

The features are also seen in Fig. 51 of the Sunga period. In the later figurine, the pudenda is even more accentuated than in the gold plaque.

The variety of figurines of the naked goddess, throughout our history, confirms the evidence to the continuity of the plastic image of woman as symbol of fertility. Somehow, the primitivist hunches of pro-creation, being the basis of whole of life in human beings, animals and plants, seem to have become part of custom and ritual. So that it was not a metaphysical concept, but a plastic symbol, expressive of the deeper felt need to exalt woman's fecundity into images of worship.

Thus the great mother of the pre-historic civilisation reappears in different incarnations.

Sunga, Fig. 52

The winged figure from Basarah, ancient Vaisali, standing on a lotus pedestal is an anticipation, according to Coomaraswamy, of the goddess Siri, the giver of fortune. The adumbration of plants and flowers around her suggests the attempt at co-ordinating the inner rhythms of flowers, clothes, jewellery, and female parts, and the exalted status is suggested by wings to fly with. Coomaraswamy suggests that the figure is Maurya or slightly earlier, but Prof. Saraswati thinks it is from the Sunga period as it is entirely moulded.

Coomaraswamy traces the connection of the winged goddess with the feminine deity on whom the elephant heads are pouring the water from inverted jars held in their trunks. Again, the stem of lotus flowers, the foliage behind, and the integration of the elephants worshipping the goddess, is a visual



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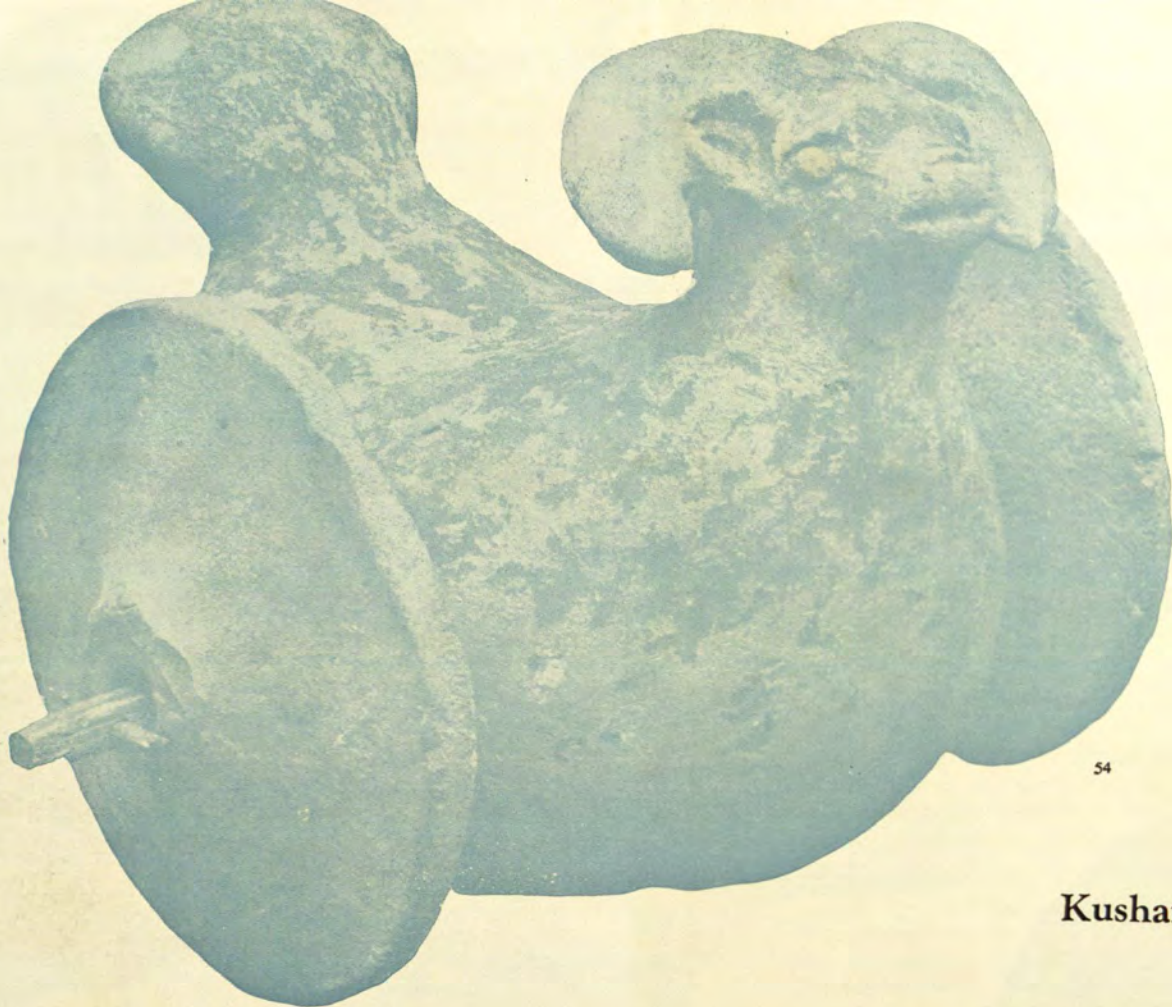


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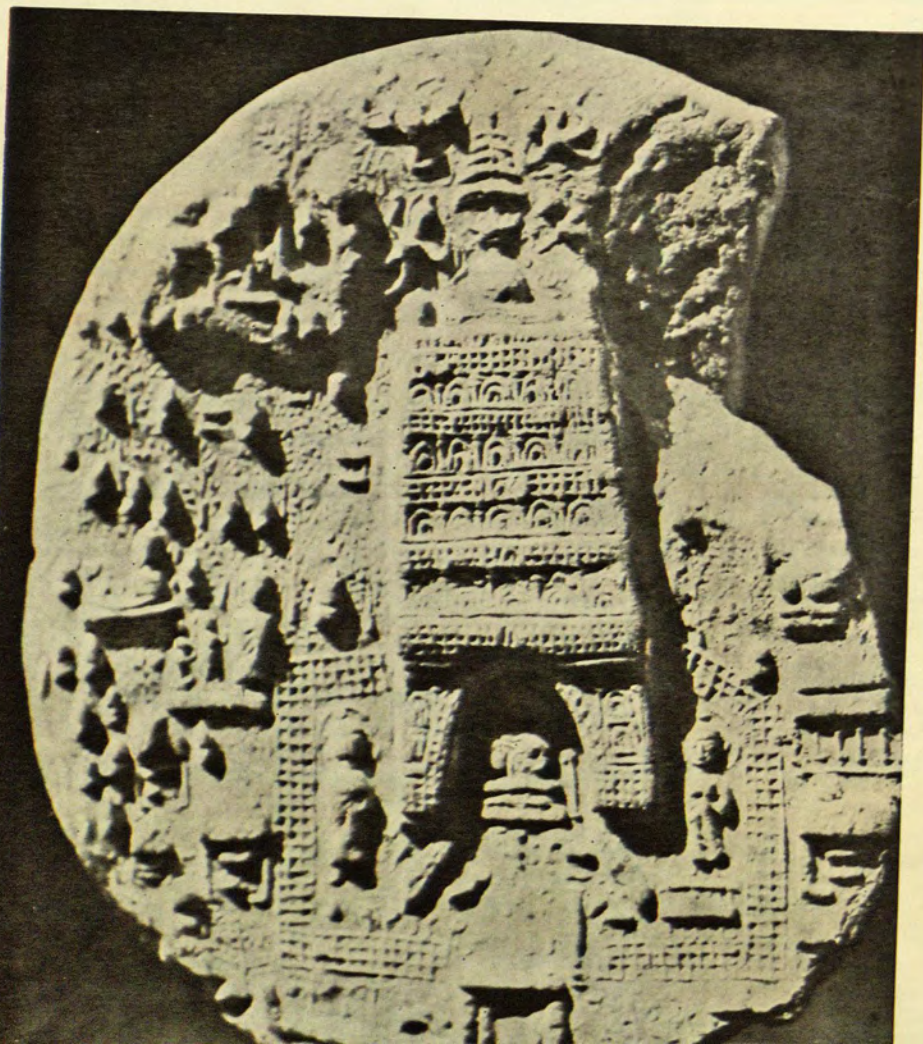
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54

Kushan



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development towards the images which were to recur in Buddhist, Jain and Hindu art.

Fig. 53

The Sunga female figurine decorated with incised clothing, and early pontilism of pellet fixtures, is akin to the oval type noticed in the Mauryan period. The beauty here is sought to be adduced from the volumes of the goddess, the big breasts, the emphasised hips, the full arms and the rich decorations.

Kushan

The fantasy of the terracotta maker imbued from within with the basic belief in the refulgence of all forms from the One seems to run freely to combinations of all the elements.

Fig. 54

There is no contradiction, for instance, in the cart wheels being attached to the protuberant ram form. Obviously the ancient imagery was still remembered in the A.D. 1st century, and flowed into the first Kushan period. Similarly, the sacred horse, with decorative and floral designs, is put on a pedestal between two wheels as the children's toy (Fig. 56).

Fig. 55

The stream of consciousness of the people brings forth, even under the ages of Buddhism, which denied images, ebullitions from the local life in this plaque. The worshippers obviously carried away such images when they came as pilgrims to shrines. The composition is finely done and verges onto the Barhut reliefs where architecture was woven into the linear rhythm of the reliefs.

Fig. 57

The two portrait heads of the Kushan period, about A.D. 1st century, approximate to the broad-faced, open-eyed smiling images of the Maurya-Sunga style. The sensuality of the full lips is symptomatic of a people freed from Buddhist restraint. Apparently the Kushans had imported the Greek pagan rites from Gandhara in their transition from Central Asia to Mathura.

Fig. 58

This shapely head may be a study for the sculptures which were in vogue through the acceptance of the image worship as a popular form of ritual.

The modelling seems to derive a certain Greek clarity, though it is essentially according to the Indian tradition of the image as portraying a living, breathing human being.

Fig. 59

"Perhaps unique of its kind, a set of powerful pot-bellied Rakshasa toy-carts discovered from Chandraketurah, envisage a grimacing tusked but bejewelled head, fashioned after the early Kushana style, devouring with evident relish a huge python (Ajagar), while tightly holding an elephant as the next item in its lunch basket. An impression of supernatural strength and bulk of the demon can be easily obtained by contrasting it with the proportion



Gupta



Fig. 63

The Gupta style, with its elaboration of plastic form into a clear illumination of the ardent face into radiant imagery, can be seen in two representative images. One of these, with the hair coiled into a crown, is informed by high finish, expressive of gentle sensuousness and refinement.

Fig. 64

The study of the ascetic with ushanisha at the back of the head, the incised hair and moustachios, is a fantastic dramatisation of the mood of this extremist type of Indian civilisation. The face is almost twisted into the arrogance of the twice-born who pretends to have realised god.

Fig. 65

The Buddha in meditation from Mirpurkhas ascribed to A.D. 5th century (Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay) is almost a study for the Sarnath Buddha. It is not likely to be an ordinary terracotta made by a potter because of the remarkable care for composition of the seated figure on the lotus inset into a decorative rectangular frame. The sensitive handling of the face with its ubiquitous smile, the delicately wrought half-closed eyes, the ring-lets of hair with the surrounding aureole witnessed to a skill which is one of the high points of achievements in the clay figure. The mellow finish of the torso, the shoulders and the leg with simple incisions of the drapery are exquisitely done and are indications of the perfection sought to be achieved in almost all arts by the Guptas.

Fig. 66

“Gupta art of India of the A.D. 4th, 5th and 6th centuries was highly sophisticated, its modelling visually exciting and passionate. No longer related to dimension of the surface, the art of classical India was fully concerned with the dimension of depth. Gupta terracottas of Bengal faithfully envisage this new-born urge for plastic relief. A striking Masthangarh head perhaps of Avalokitesvara is notable for voluptuous modelling, subtle, summary rendering of the flesh, typical Gupta curls, down-cast eyes and heavy lips indicative of inward introspection.” —D.P.G.

Figs. 67, 69

The simplification of the highly stylised Gupta heads achieves the zenith of accomplishment with their marble finish. The expressionism of the intense eyes, and the pout of misgiving on the lips, is indicative of moments of awareness which were now frequent fits of self-consciousness.

Fig. 68

The treatment of animals is equally skilful and expressive, simplifying and distorting the eyes of the monkey just enough to create the weariness of the animal.

The pontilism on the body of tiger communicates the ferocity as much as the wide open mouth.



Fig. 70

The two portrait heads, one with an oval face, and the other with round face, both with full lips, seem to be in transition from the Maurya-Sunga-Kushan tradition, to the finer and more graceful figures of the Guptas.

Fig. 71

The kneeling figure of a devotee resembles a relief sculpture.

Fig. 72

The Buddha head in terracotta with the rings of hair has obvious affinity with sculptures in Sarnath.

Fig. 73

The Ganga-Jumna panel, with its elaborate incisions of the garments, the full-bodied forms, resting on the tortoise, verge onto concreteness, where the Gupta tradition is in its baroque phase.

Fig. 74

The panel showing the battle between two kings about the woman in the middle, while the elaborate chariots wait below, leads us to the early mediaeval revival of feelings, which have been sublimated beyond access, into a certain harmony by the Guptas.

The terracotta art here is reverting back to its folk impulses to re-emerge later on among the upper hierarchies.

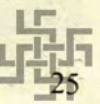
“More than half a dozen terracotta reliefs of this group from Ranga Mahal, almost sculptures in clay and rectangular in shape, are full of iconographic interest. Some of them are glaring examples about the popularity of ‘Krishna-Cult’ in Bikaner region at such an early date. The ‘Govardhanadhara panel is the earliest representation of this particular theme in Indian art; another contemporary or earlier specimen of this nature has not been discovered as yet. The same view holds true in case of ‘Dana Lila’ terracotta relief wherein Krishna is shown in the rustic dress; he puts on a short dhoti and holds a staff in the left hand. To his right stands a milkmaid (*gopi*) holding a pot of milk on her head. Her dress is extremely charming and so is the smile on her face; the nether garment is a typical non-Indian skirt and reminds us of a literary text referring to the *Yavanao Kanyacholako*; it might have been a copy from the Western counterpart. Noteworthy are two *Saiva* reliefs depicting One-faced *Siva-Linga* under worship and *Siva-Parvati* in seated pose. The latter is of unusual iconographic interest because here we find three heads of *Siva* in a single row whereas the fourth appears above in typical Kushana tradition; *Siva* is shown, with his penis erect, as a perfect *Yogi*; he holds a pot in the left hand while the right hand is placed in *Jnana mudra*, near his chest; he takes his seat on a couchant *Nandi*-bull. His spouse *Parvati*, seated to his left, holds a long-handled mirror in her left hand; the *lahanga* has got prominent folds under the impact of Gandhara Art. The terracotta



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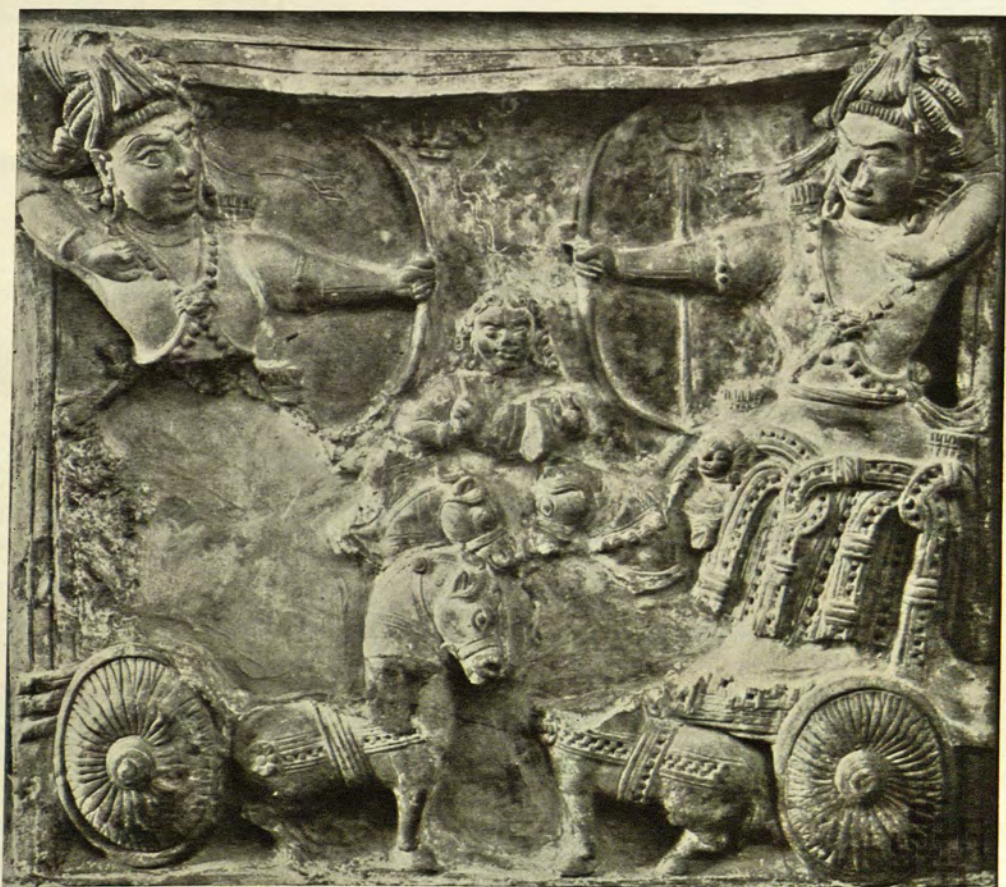
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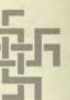




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plaque is one of the very early Siva-Parvati reliefs in Indian art. Quite rare is the depiction of *Chakra Purusha* (i.e. personification of Vishnu's wheel in human form) on a separate relief and likewise that of a single-legged and goat-headed (*Ajaikapada*) from the site of Rangamahar, near Suratgarh. All these terracottas have got an important bearing on the art and culture of Bikaner region at such an early age. They are now exhibited in the Government Museum at Bikaner, along with a 'Kaolin' Vishnu plaque wherein we find moustaches on Vishnu's face and typically Kushana crown on the head above.

Gupta terracotta plaques of the above type have also been reported from Nagari (near Chittor) and Keshoraya Patana (near Bundi) in Rajasthan. Besides this, a number of tiny pieces, excavated at Noh, Rairh, Sambhar, etc., are now on display in the Museum at Amber, near Jaipur. After the fall of the Gupta empire in India, the art of terracotta manufacture received a great setback and greater stress was laid on stone sculpture as is evident from numerous early Pratihara temples and sculptures from different parts of Rajasthan.

The aforesaid terracottas from Rajasthan thus occupy an important place in early Indian art; some of them are quite rare indeed."—R.C.A.

The full-grown woman (Fig. 75), a camel with floral decoration (Fig. 76) and the *Chakra-Purusha* (Fig. 78) are the typical examples of Ranga Mahal terracottas.

Fig. 77

"The terracotta depicting *Aja-ekpada* measuring 14.5" x 8.5" from Rangmahal is very unique for its subject. It shows a goat-headed, two-armed figure, wearing a *yajnopavita*. The lower part of the body is in the form of an elephant's leg. *Aja* has been supposed to be a form of *Agni* who was depicted as a goat-headed deity. The right hand is here broken but the left one holds a leafy basket full of fruits or sweet balls. There is a clear sign of a *linga* on the lower portion of the body.

Fig. 79

Danalila—The depiction of the *Danalila* episode, connected with the life of Lord Krishna in a terracotta, is very interesting. We find in this depiction a milkmaid with a milk vessel on her head. Krishna demands tribute from this milkmaid. The depiction of the costumes of the males and females is very vivid in this terracotta. The milkmaid puts on a typical skirt (*Ghagra*), tied below the navel in the same manner in which women of Rajasthan do it even now and covers her head with a Rajasthani scarf (*lugari*).



years still continue to inspire the rural artists of Bengal in the making of terracotta dolls and toys to the present day. It is indeed very difficult to recognise whether the village fair mother-goddess (Sashthi) is a pre-historic figure or a contemporary creation. Strange are the modern beak-nosed painted dolls from Narajole, Hooghly, Mymensing and other places having a fan-shaped Harappan head-dress and a pinched child clinging closely to the body.

Terracottas of Bengal, throughout the ages, are essentially products of the plains. The weight of the vast delta with its intricate waterways has shaped the thoughts and vision of the people. Through the medium of terracottas alone and through subtle craftsmanship they left indelible and fascinating impressions of the gods they worshipped, the dolls and toys which their children loved to play with, almost unaffected in type and technique by the kaleidoscopic socio-historical changes, through centuries and millenia." —D.P.G.

"During the Ahom age the pottery industry flourished as these were in great demand as cooking and eating vessels for all classes of people. Those were even used by the royal household for hygienic and ceremonial reasons. Eric T. D. Lambert asserts that the bricks of this period were similar to those used in Siam in the Ayuthia period. The variety of mediaeval bricks and other architectural members in terracotta is astonishing. Bricks were square, rectangular, triangular, round, perforated and fluted. The best examples of edifices decorated with terracotta plaques are the Ghanasyam Do'l (A.D. 1751-'69) at Jaysagar, Sibhsagar and the dilapidated temple known as the Nau Math (New Shrine) near the temple of Kamakhya, Gauhati. Baghapara in Goalpara district produced some of the finest terracotta plaques of the 17th century of which the row of geese (Fig.87) and the dancing group (Fig.88) are the best. The dancing and the hunting scenes and also the lively figure of the fighting bull stand out most prominently.

But the Nau Math near the Kamakhya temple, Gauhati has exquisite full size pillars and pilasters of terracotta in perforated designs (Fig. 89).

The facades of these buildings were made to look like wooden structures of Assam by means of terracotta embellishments representing wooden posts, pilaster and carved panels (Fig. 90).

The corners of the building have fin-like projections and are entirely made of figures of acrobats arranged in a vertical row. (Fig. 91).

Though the Ghanasyama Do'l is intact the Nau Math is crumbling. But the terracottas of the latter are far better preserved and have preserved their brilliant burnt earth colour."

—D.G.



Mediaeval



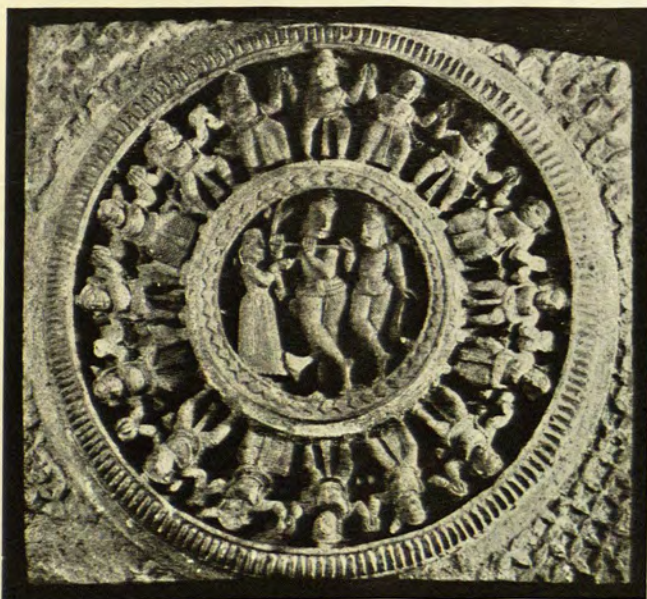
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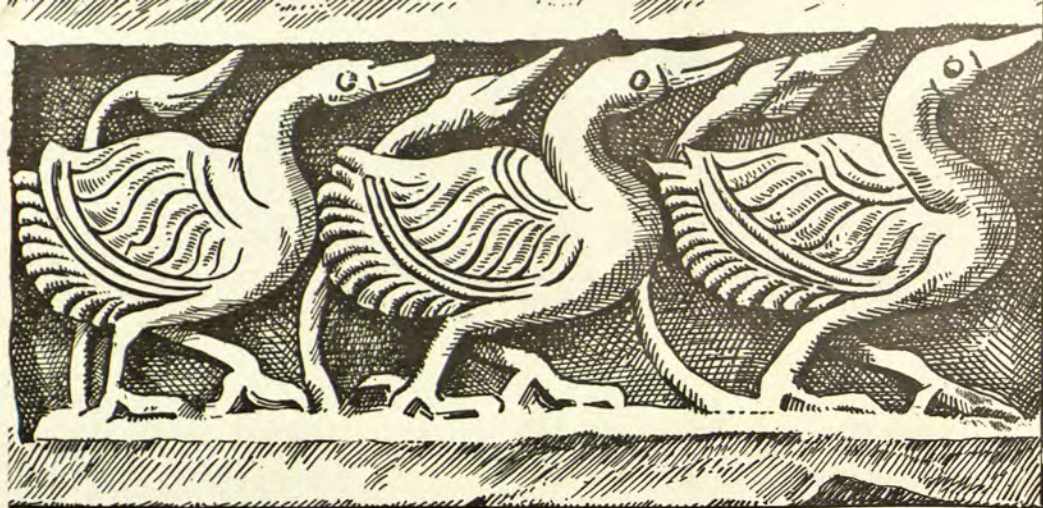


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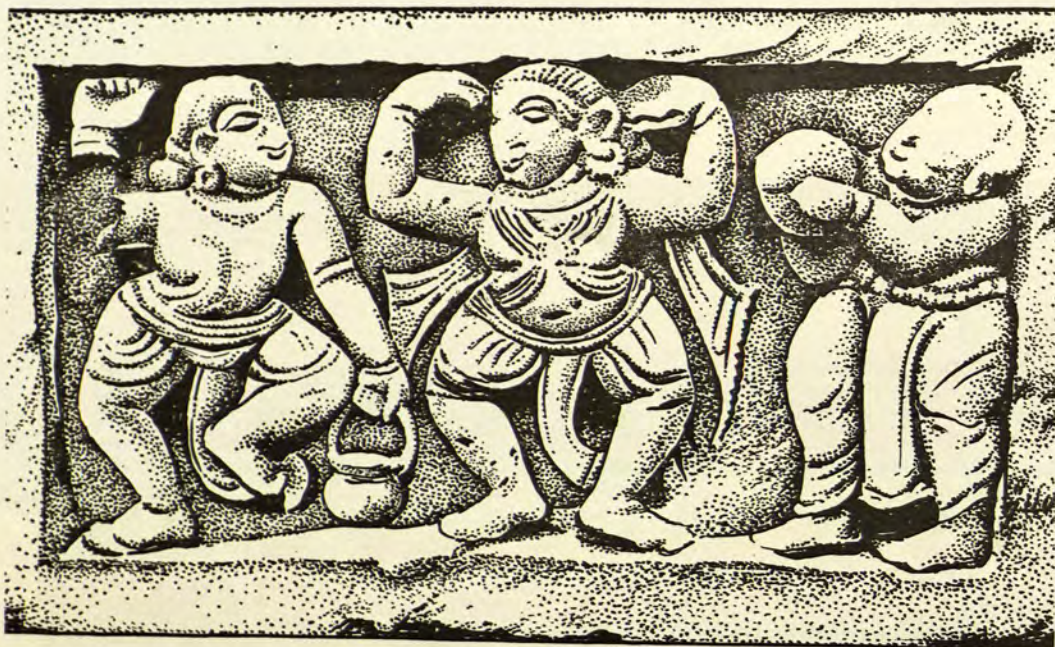


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THE TERRACOTA ART OF INDIA

Since remotest past man has loved to make figures of clay and the art of clay may be said to be as old as man himself. Unfortunately, the earliest stages of its development are not well documented. Fire was an important factor in the production of terracotta. Through the early stone-age man in

five stage five lakh years ago, the knowledge of making fired clay objects, which are of vital importance, is evidenced so far shows that the earliest expressions of man in clay go back to 15,000 years before. Indians' two, fashioned images of men and women and animals from a very

early period. The terracotta art of India, on any showing, bespeak of an advanced technique of modelling. Be that as it may, the terracotta art of India has a history of thousands of years or more. The Indians have never been tired of exploiting the plasticity of clay and it is one of the few countries where terracottas were produced on an unbroken tradition still continues in unbroken succession.

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centres of the terracotta art in the north. The art did not flourish in the south for want of fine clay. In the Deccan too, clay of the required quality was not available and the artists, therefore, had to work in kankar. But except in the Satavahana the art did not flourish in the south.

The earliest terracottas of the village of the hilly uplands of the Deccan were made by hand, but within a very short space of time we notice marked development in the technique of modelling by the Deccan artists.

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A casual glance at the 'famous' range of terracottas gives us an insight into the content of the art form. The early terracottas were mostly associated with the religious ideas of the pioneering farmers—the Mother Goddess and the bull cult. The Harappan, however, also produced a variety of toys. But more secular subjects were handled only by Mauryan artists who fashioned exquisite statues of boys and dancing girls. The Gupta terracottas comprise amorous couples (*amorous*), a novel motif which later becomes extremely popular. In the early centuries of the Christian era the artist produced what can be called the true signature sculpture of the period—the

—H. D. SANKALIA

—M. K. DHAVALIKAR



THE TERRACOTA ART OF INDIA

Since remotest past man has loved to make figures of clay and the art of clay can be said to be as old as man himself. Unfortunately, the earliest stages of its development are not well documented. Fire was an important factor in the production of terracottas. Although the early stone-age man in China knew the use of fire since five lakh years before, it is the knowledge of making fire and its controlled use which are of vital importance. The evidence so far shows that the earliest artistic expressions of man in clay go back to 15,000 years before. Indians, too, fashioned images of men and women and animals from a very early period but the terracotta art in India does not go back to the Upper Palaeolithic as it does in Europe, but it is not unlikely that the stone-age man in India used clay to give shape to his artistic and religious ideas. This is all the more probable, for the earliest terracottas in India, on any showing, bespeak of an advanced technique of modelling. Be that as it may, the terracotta art of India has a history of five thousand years or more. The Indians have never been tired of exploiting the plasticity of clay and it is one of the few countries where terracottas were produced on an unimaginably large scale and for a variety of purposes, and the tradition still continues in unbroken succession.

The clay as a medium of art expression is easily tractable and lends itself to any shape thus satisfying the artistic urge of common man. Hence, the terracotta art has often enough been dubbed as poor man's art. It undoubtedly holds good in case of some countries where clear-cut differentiation could be made between the court art and the folk art; the former patronized and reared as a hot-house plant by the royalty and the latter cultivated by common man. But the history of Indian terracottas shows that clay was given equal preference by the rich and the poor alike. Bana, a 7th century poet, tells us of emperor Harsha who, on the occasion of the marriage of his sister, employed artists to make terracotta figures of auspicious fruit, trees and aquatic creatures for decorative purposes¹. This weakness of the Indian for clay is, in the main, due to its plasticity and easy availability in large quantities in the rich alluvium of the Ganga-Yamuna doab. This also explains the location of the main

centres of the terracotta art in the north. The art did not flourish in the south for want of fine clay. In the Deccan too, clay of the required quality was not available and the artists, therefore, had to work in kaolin. But except under the Satavahanas the art did not flourish in the Deccan.

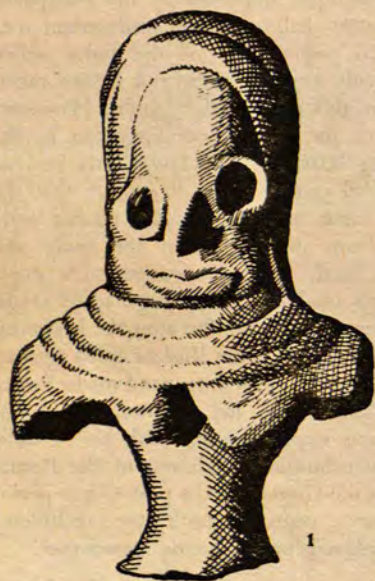
The earliest terracottas of the village communities of the hilly uplands of the northwest frontier of the sub-continent were modelled by hand, but within a very short space of time we notice marked development in the technique employed by the Harappans in the latter half of third millennium B.C. The urban potter-artist of the Indus valley did not only produce finer and better terracottas but also devised the mould. However, the use of the mould was forgotten in the succeeding 'Dark Age' and was only revived in the third century B.C. It appears that the faces of some of the Mauryan figures were pressed from mould, while the body was made on hand. In the Sunga period a single mould was used on a very large scale as the flat plaques would show. But after the beginning of the Christian era, the Kushan artist ignored the mould and reverted to hand-made forms. At the same time his counterpart in the Deccan was experimenting with the double-mould, a technique which was of the Roman origin. In the Gupta and the post-Gupta period after fourth century, both the techniques were employed for producing terracottas.

A casual glance at the immense range of terracottas gives us an insight into the content of the art form. The early terracottas were mostly associated with the religious ideas of the pioneering farmers—the Mother Goddess and the bull cult. The Harappans, however, also produced a variety of toys. But true secular subjects were handled only by Mauryan artists who fashioned exquisite statuettes of boys and dancing girls. The Sunga terracottas comprise amorous couples (*mithunas*), a novel motif which later becomes extremely popular. In the early centuries of the Christian era the artist produced what can be called the true miniature sculpture in clay. The revival of Hinduism is reflected in the large-scale

production of terracotta plaques depicting mythological scenes from the epics and *puranas*. The artistic standards, however, deteriorate in the post-Gupta epoch, and the production comes to a grinding halt in the mediaeval period.

Pre-Harappan

The earliest terracottas so far discovered are those from the northwest regions of the sub-continent. They are the products of the first food-producing communities of the Zhob and Kulli cultures. These pre-Harappans had mastered the technique of fashioning human and animal figurines, all hand-made, in the beginning of third millennium B.C. Of the two, those from Kulli are more prolific. These village communities were more or less contemporary and they also appear to have coincided with each other at certain stages of their development, but they do not seem to have influenced each other so far as their artistic creations are concerned. The Kulli peasants produced fine animal figurines, mostly of bulls, which were painted with black stripes all over the body and the eyes were marked by painted circles. They are closely akin to the bulls painted on pottery. It is significant that such painted bull figurines were found in large numbers in restricted areas in the excavations at Mehri, Kulli and Shahi Tump. This would lead one to surmise that they were probably used as votive offerings in certain rituals. The bulls are rather small in size (about 5-10 cms. or 2"-4"); they have stumpy legs and a very prominent hump. Even though they display a coarse treatment, the naturalistic modelling is evident. Some of them might have been used as toys, for they have a hole in each leg for yoking to the cart.



1. Mother goddess figurine from the Zhob Valley.

The female figurines of the Kulli culture-complex bear certain distinguishing features. They are plain and have a pinched nose. Some parts of the body such as the eyes, hair, navel and breasts are indicated by applique pellets of clay. They wear elaborate head-dresses and jewellery, all applied. The hands are usually akimbo; only in a solitary example they are shown above the breasts. The exact nature and purpose of these female figures remains obscure. In this connexion mention should be made of a female figurine holding two infants in arms. This may indicate that some of them were mother goddesses. An important characteristic of the figures is that they usually have a pedestalled base. It was possibly provided with a view to keeping them on some sort of a platform for ritualistic purposes.

The Zhob bulls are not as plentiful as the Kulli ones. They are severely plain. But typologically both are akin to each other. The Zhob bulls are of a sturdier build and their modelling displays an advanced naturalistic

treatment. Horse figurines have also been found which may be due to the presence of the beast in that region from an early time.

The Zhob female figurines (Fig. 1) show a certain development or technique. They all end below the waist in a pedestalled base. They have goblin-like faces on account of the owl-like nose and deep eye holes. Their full rounded breasts with marked nipples are betoken of their association with the fertility cult. Like the Kulli figures, they also wear elaborate head-dress and jewellery, all applique. Their gruesome features are suggestive of their being a terrific embodiment of the primitive mother goddess. They have their prototypes in western Asia, more particularly in Iran whence the inspiration probably came.

Harappan

The Harappans produced abundant terracottas. The female figurines which have been identified as mother goddesses (Fig. 2) were made by pinching and by pressing the thumb; the eyes were marked by small pellets, while a separate thin strip of clay was applied for mouth. The breasts and navel were indicated by pellets or cones. Their elaborate head-dresses, usually fan-shaped, were also in applique. The technique of fashioning these figures is almost the same as that in vogue in Kulli and Zhob; the only difference is that the Harappan figurines do not have pedestalled bases. Moreover, a certain freedom of movement is discernible in the Harappan figurines; they are not stylized as their predecessors from the hilly regions of the north-west. The Harappan women are shown in a variety of poses such as kneading the dough, nursing and crawling the child etc. Some other female figurines represent a type of mother goddess with prominent breasts and broad hips and adorned profusely with applique ornaments.

There are some nude figures with arms either on or round the knees, joined in front in devotion and sometimes squatting on haunches. Their abstract rendering would do credit to an *avant garde* artist of our own times. The mother goddess figures are predominant at Harappa and Mohenjodaro but male figures are very few. This assumes added significance when we remember that in the Kulli and Zhob collection there is not a single male figure. This was probably due to the predominance of some mother goddess cult, especially in a matrilineal and matriarchal society. In sharp contrast to this, the mother goddess figurines are very few at Kalibangan (Rajasthan) and Lothal (Gujarat) where some male figures have been found. They are extremely primitive and the technique does not show any advance.

There are innumerable animal figures from Harappan sites. Among these, bulls are most

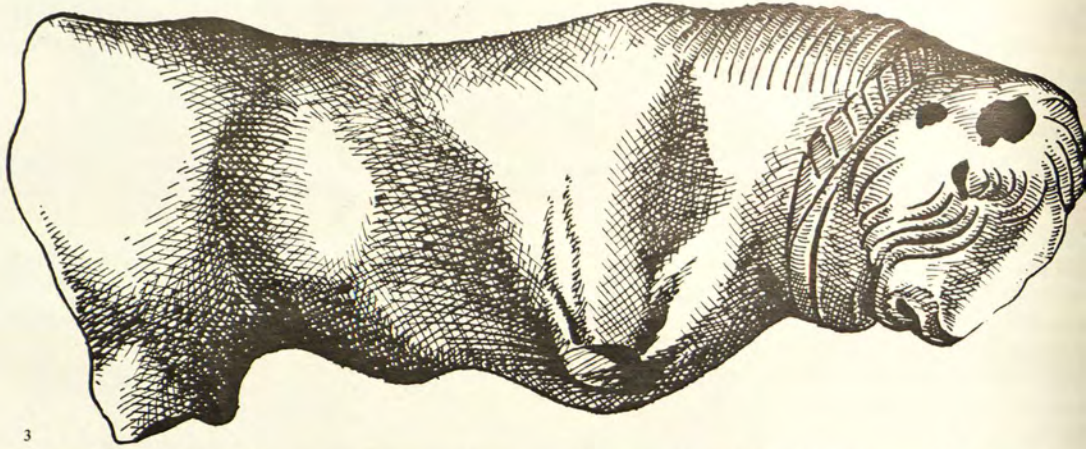


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2. A Harappan mother goddess.

3. Bull from Kalibangan
(Rajasthan)



prominent. In them one can easily recognise a naturalistic modelling reminiscent of the Kulli and the Zhob bulls. The predominance of bulls leads one to surmise that there probably existed a bull cult in the Indus valley, for, as Marshall states, "In prehistoric times the worship of the bull... was widely disseminated throughout the Middle and Near East, where he appeared sometimes as a beneficent guardian of the homestead, sometimes as a malevolent storm demon."²

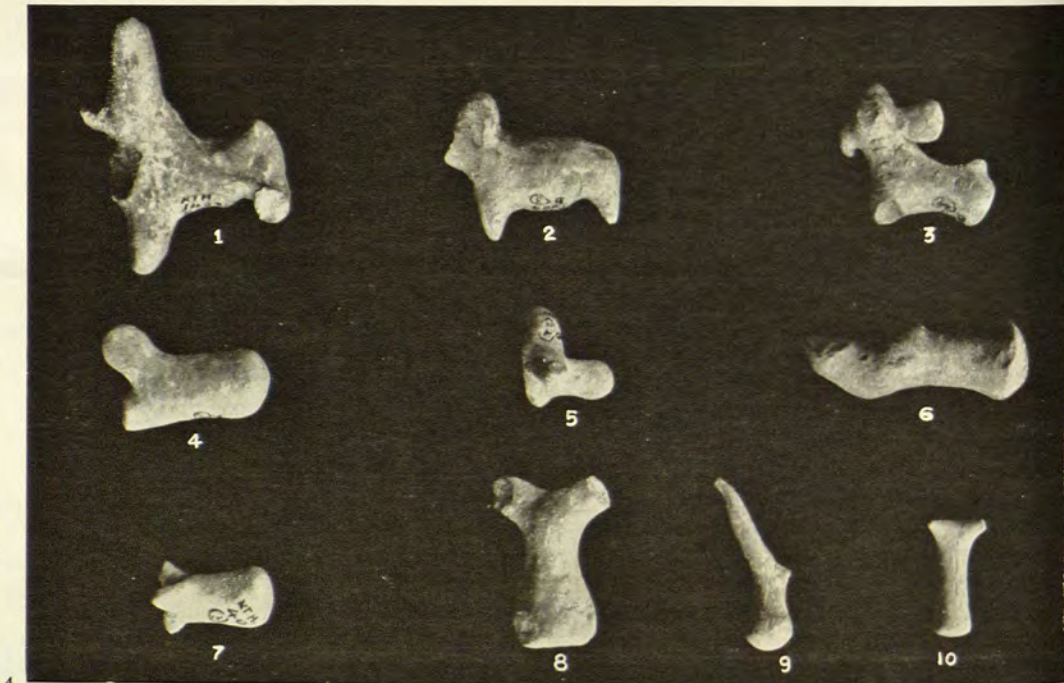
The variety of animals is indeed striking, for, besides bulls, there are monkeys, ram, goat, rhino, elephant, pig, lion and above all a horse (onegar) and a gorilla from Lothal. This is of course due to culture change from peasant communities to urban civilization. The bulls (Fig. 3) are mostly of the short horned species and their dewlap is very characteristically represented by ridges or in separate strips. In some examples, the hump and the dewlap look rather exaggerated. The fleece of rams,

however, is indicated by a series of nail marks and the wrinkled hide of the rhino by added strips of clay; it is sometimes depicted by hatching or pitting.

A majority of the animals are also depicted on seals. This is indicative of their religious association. Many of the animal figures might have been used as votive offerings. But quite a number of them were toys; they form a class by themselves and can easily be distinguished, for they have moveable heads and some are mounted on wheels. As today, children loved to play with toy carts, which have been found at all Harappan sites. Equally interesting are the bird toys which include cock, hen, parrot, peacock, and bird chariots and bird whistles. Some of the birds were decorated with red lines to denote plumage, often with a red ring to show that they were ring doves.

A large majority of the Harappan terracottas are solid and are evidently made by hand. The

4. Bull figurines from Kayatho
(M.P.) (Deccan College)



human figures, however, are characterised by coarse modelling. But the highly stylized forms of male figures demonstrate that the artist was certainly ahead of his time. The artist no doubt evokes our admiration for his naturalistic and sympathetic treatment of animal figures. They are mostly solid and were undoubtedly made by hand. But a few larger specimens are supposed to have been worked over an inner core of straw; while baking, the straw was burnt leaving the inside hollow. There is also some definite evidence suggesting the use of moulds. Small masks which are reported from Harappa and Mohenjodaro in good numbers appear to have been pressed from moulds as their thinness would indicate. The figures, after firing, were usually treated with a red wash, while there are examples which show that they were coated with a slip. Curiously enough there are also traces of polychrome colouring on some terracottas.³

Post Harappan (Chalcolithic)

Some twenty years ago the period between the end of the Indus valley or the Harappan civilization and the early historic period was really a 'Dark Age'. But now, in 1969, the picture has changed, for the work that has been done in the post-independence period has brought to light a number of chalcolithic cultures in Western and Central India and the Deccan. The authors of these cultures were the pioneering colonizers who introduced food-producing economy. They were no doubt adept at pot-making, but we do not know much about their terracotta art in the absence of adequate evidence. Whatever that has survived shows that the artistic standards were on the decline during the post-Harappan period. For the chalcolithic communities of the Central and Western India it was rather a luxury which they could not afford during the early stages of their struggle for survival. This is apparent from the evidence thus far unearthed from excavations of several sites in the sub-continent. The only ray of hope is from western Malwa where the potter artists of the Ahar and the Malwa cultures seem to have set a new trend in the terracotta art. The excavations at Kayatha (Dt. Ujjain, M.P.) conducted by the Deccan College, Poona and the Vikram University, Ujjain, have brought to light a number of terracotta animal figurines of a singularly unique variety for they have not so far been reported from other sites. These terracottas can be assigned, on the basis of C-14 determinations, to a period from c. 1900—1300 B.C.

These terracottas comprise only animal figures among which the most predominant are bulls (Fig. 4). They are divisible into two distinct groups on stylistic grounds, viz. (i) naturalistic and (ii) stylized. They are all made of fine clay which is devoid of any impurities, and are baked at a uniform

temperature. No figure is treated with slip of any kind, nor is there any attempt at painted ornamentation. The only decoration, if one can call it that, consists of nail marks over the body of the animals. This, though rare, recalls to the mind similar treatment on Harappan figurines. On several specimens we also see the impressions of the hands that fashioned them. The delicate modelling is evidenced in the long, curved, pointed horns; the hump is most prominent and the mouth is pinched. There is no attempt at showing the mouth or eyes, and the 'block' legs remind us of similar treatment of the protohistoric terracottas.

Of the naturalistic rendering there is nothing especially noteworthy; it is the stylized forms which deserve special attention. There are several varieties of the stylized forms. In a majority of cases the head with horns and the prominent hump are present but the whole hind part is represented by a stem with a rounded end (Fig. 4, 4-7); sometimes the end is flat and thus serves as a pedestalled base probably for keeping on a platform during the ritual (Fig. 4, 8-10). The degree of stylization reaches a new mark in the form which depicts a pair of short horns on a stemmed pedestal. Such horns at once remind us of the horn cult of the Minoans in whose palace at Knossos we come across several representations of a pair of horns. It is only a family resemblance and beyond that no relationship can be hazarded.

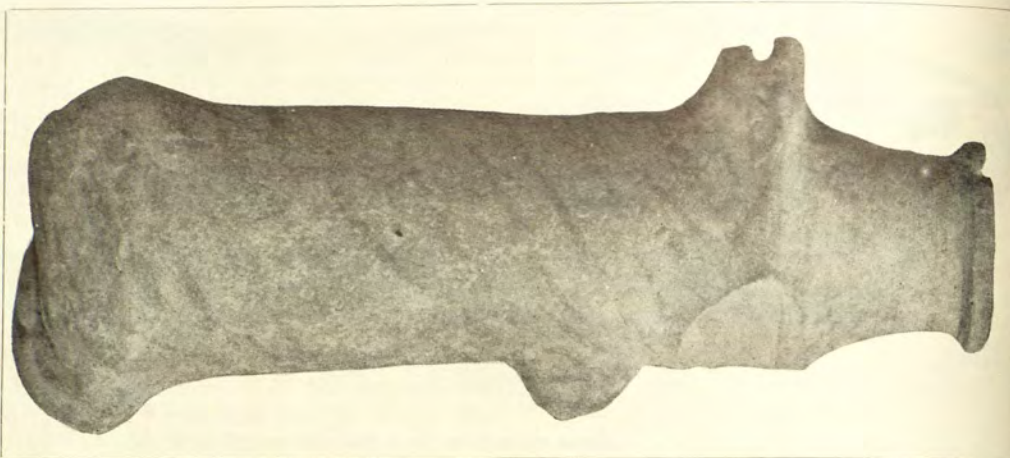
The naturalistic and the stylized forms are found together and even among the latter, all the different varieties occur right from the beginning, thus precluding any attempt at tracing the evolution of different forms. The stylized bull forms are unique in as much as they have no parallels within the country and they therefore remain an enigma.

The terracotta art of the early farmers of Central India and the Deccan consists of animal figurines, mostly bulls and the female figurines which are characterized by flat, crude modelling which is certainly primitive. The female figurines usually have stumpy legs and tapering hands; the facial features are mostly absent while the breasts are shown in applique. Sometimes such figures were applied to huge handmade storage jars. This would associate them with the fertility cult and they can, therefore, be identified as mother goddesses. One such figure from Nevasa has a wide flaring base and short stumpy hands (Fig. 5). Another from Bahal (Maharashtra) is quite flat and might have once adorned a jar⁵. From Navda Toli (M. P.) we have jars with applied female and animal figures⁶. The tortoise on a jar from Prakash is also interesting⁷. But most artistic are the zoomorphic bottles from Nevasa and Chandoli (Fig. 7). These are indeed stylized bulls with a religious significance.



5. Mother goddess from Nevasa (Maharashtra) (Deccan College)

7



The terracotta figurines of the neolithic farmers of the Southern Deccan comprise mostly of bulls. Though crude in treatment, they are stylistically akin to those in rock paintings and rock brushings.

The recent excavations at Inamgaon (Dt. Poona, Maharashtra) have brought to light an entirely new class of clay figurines of males (Fig. 8). They can be taken to be the handiwork of the Late Jorwe people who, on stratigraphical grounds, can be assigned to c. 1200-800 B. C. The figurines are characterized by coarse modelling; they have stumpy legs and arms and a flat body. A unique feature of these terracottas is that they are all unbaked in sharp contrast to the well-baked mother goddess figurines. Very similar figurines are even today made by villagers in the surroundings of Inamgaon on special occasions. The figures are made of wheat flour and are invoked for success in the celebrations. They are known as Ganesa (a name given in imitation of the later Ganesh as *mangalamurti*).

Their chalcolithic proto-types were also probably made on some such special occasion. This also explains why they are unbaked. It may also be stated in this connection that very similar male figurines of unbaked clay have been found in the recent excavations at Shahr-i-Sokhta, a chalcolithic settlement in Iranian Sistan.⁸

The fiddle-shaped terracotta figurines from Central Indian chalcolithic sites (1700 B.C.—1200 B.C.) are also the representations of the mother goddess (Fig. 6). They bear a family resemblance with marble figures from the Cycladic Islands of Greece, but the relationship cannot be stretched further. Anyway, the evidence on the whole shows that the wonderful terracotta art of the Harappans died with them; what we have in the chalcolithic habitations are not even their jejune shadows.

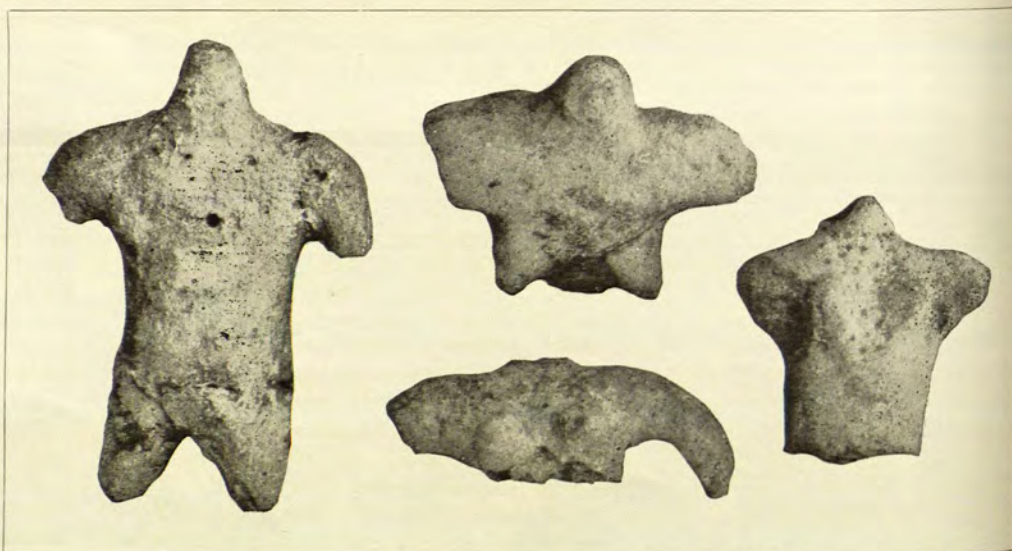
About the beginnings of the first millennium B.C. India undergoes a radical change in the cultural pattern because of the introduction



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6. Mother goddess from Bilawali (M.P.)
7. Zoomorphic bottle from Chandoli (Maharashtra)
8. Gods and goddesses from Inamgaon (Maharashtra) (Deccan College)

8



of iron, a superior metal for weaponry and the fast moving vehicle—the horse-drawn chariot. These Iron Age conquerors do not appear to have any artistic inclinations; the few specimens of clay figurines that have survived in the Ganga valley testify to their poor artistic taste. Whatever remains is also indicative not of the creative power of the new people but only of the feeble survival of an earlier tradition. The degeneration of the artistic standards is in all probability due to the unsettled conditions, and it takes a long time for the revival of the terracotta art. When the congenial conditions obtained, we witness the first attempts of the artist of the early historic period. He has produced something which shows no previous experience, but at the same time he cannot be said to have been far removed artistically from his proto-historic predecessor. The early terracottas have rightly been styled by Stella Kramrisch as the 'Timeless' types.⁹ They are modelled by hand and rarely have a moulded head.

The early historical terracottas comprise human and animal figures and sometimes also chariots. These have come mostly from sites in Bihar such as Buxar and Patna. The human figure, with entire volume more or less flattened, has horizontal hands which look stumpy. Typologically they are closely related to the protohistoric mother goddess figurines. The parallel is no doubt significant and is only betoken of the persistent tradition. Such figures are reported to have been found in large numbers at Kausambi and Bhita in U.P. Related to this group are a number of archaic figures from Mathura.

The Pataliputra figures are more articulate for they possess limbs and facial features too. The nose is pinched and eyes are indicated by circlets. The arms are either held in front or akimbo; the breasts and the navel are marked by circles and there are incised lines on the neck, waist and legs. Their curious fan-shaped head-dresses and the block leg treatment are reminiscent of the Harappan tradition.

The Magadh sites have also yielded a fairly good number of some curious terracotta plaques depicting a *naga* head with human body. The *naga* head has applied pellets for eyes and the horizontal lines simulate the body. Below the head is the narrow waist while the hips are inordinately voluminous. All this shows that they are distinctly female types. They sometimes have a perforation at the top for suspension. They possibly represent the snake goddess Manasa. The association of the female with the serpent element is indeed interesting. Kramrisch has dated these figures to the Sunga and Kushan periods (100 B.C.—A.D. 100).¹⁰ But the dating should be revised now in the light of stratigraphical evidence from recent excavations which shows that the *naga* figures are associated

with the Northern Black Polished ware and as such have to be dated to c. 600 B.C.—200 B.C.¹¹

The foregoing discussion amply makes it clear that we must obtain more and more reliable data, particularly stratigraphical, from excavations so that we can place the different phases of the terracotta art of India on a firmer chronological footing. This is further corroborated by the evidence from the excavation of a metropolis of the northwest frontier. The excavation at Charsadda (ancient Puskaravati) have brought to light a fair number of terracotta figurines known as the 'Baroque Ladies' in closely sealed deposits.¹² They form a distinctive group of figures which have long been known to characterize the frontier region.

The figures are produced in large quantities and are confined to the west of the Indus; only two or three were found at Taxila which is 50 miles east of the Indus. They are usually 6" to 7" long and are made of fine clay. They have a prominent 'pinched' nose and applique eyes. The breasts are small and separately fixed but the navel is not indicated. The girdle on the hips is shown by a small incised line. The generative organ is sometimes, though not invariably, indicated. Their arms look like pointed stumps, while the tapering legs are separated only by an incised line. They wear sparse jewellery and their head-dress consisting of rosettes resembles a tiara. Another conspicuous ornament is the cross-bands (*chhannavira*) on chest. A very characteristic and distinguishing feature of these ladies is that they are steatopygous (*prithu-sroni*).

The 'Baroque Ladies' were first published by Coomaraswamy who, on technical and stylistical grounds, assigned them to the second millennium B.C.¹³ This early date set off a lively controversy, for Gordon¹⁴ who acquired some figures of this class thought them to be the representations of the Scythian or Iranian goddess 'Anaitis' or 'Anahid'. The provenance of his collection was Sari Dheri (NWFP) and he first proposed 100 B.C.—A.D. 100 as the time bracket for such figures. Later he collected a few more from the Bhir mound of Taxila and slightly modified his dating to 200 B.C. A third scholar Mlle Simone Corbier¹⁵ entered the fray. Her excavation of Sari Dheri led her to date them to third millennium B.C. Thus in the absence of scientific excavation, these ladies were almost hanging in a chronological vacuum between third millennium B.C. to the beginning of our era. Sir Mortimer Wheeler's excavation at Charsadda has clearly shown that, on stratigraphical grounds and the evidence of associated finds, the figurines can be said to have appeared sometime in the 3rd century B.C.; they flourished for more than a century and totally went out of vogue in the latter half of the second century B.C.¹⁷



Mauryan

The consolidation of the Mauryan empire under a unified rule ushered in a distinctive cultural phase. The period is marked by a sudden spurt in the artistic activity and the terracotta art also made rapid strides. The primitive types of the preceding age almost vanish and an entirely new group of human figures appears. Such figures are outstanding in the whole range of Indian terracottas, not only because of their size but also because of their remarkable stylistic traits in respect of physiognomy and expression. A number of Mauryan terracotta figurines have come from the capital city of Pataliputra and its environs and also from other centres in the Ganga valley.

Several terracotta human figures were recovered from the excavations at Bulandi Bagh. They are quite large in size and are characterised by smooth and sensitive modelling. Each of them represents a complete figure in the round in spite of the frontal treatment. It appears that the faces were pressed from the mould and the remaining parts were modelled by hand; both were then joined together before firing. The characteristic features of the figures are the linear composition and their static quality. The female figures can be easily distinguished on account of their fluttering skirts (Figs. 9, 10 & 11). Their costume and poses suggest that they are dancing girls. The uplifted edges of the skirt show the swinging motion of the body, but the legs, however, are inartistic and stumpy. The head-dress is equally conspicuous; it is extremely complicated and consists of a number of discs. These dancers wear ear studs, necklaces and girdles.

Comparison of these with the present-day Manipuri and Naga dance poses shows great affinity and proves that these dances are as old as the Mauryan period or that these people have copied Mauryan terracottas. If the first alternative is correct, then it shows the great antiquity of Indian dance forms, whether our oldest writer on the drama—Bharata—mentions them or not.

Another important centre of Mauryan terracottas was Mathura from where a number of specimens have been collected. Among them is a special class of terracotta heads in which the facial features present foreign ethnic affinities. The head-dress is usually of the bicornate type but sometimes we also come across a foreigner with conical headgear. The faces undoubtedly were pressed from a mould while the body, which is missing in most of the cases, was modelled by hand, rather crudely. The beard is shown by indentation marks on the chin. They are assigned to the Mauryan period when Indians very frequently came in contact with Iranians.

The toy animals of the Mauryan epoch are often characterised by a thick black slip, sometimes with a crude burnishing. They seem to have been made along with the typical Northern Black Polished ware and the black slipped pottery of the Mauryan period and baked in the same kiln. The figures also sometimes bear incised circlets on their body. Similar decoration is also noticed on the contemporary human figures. It is either a circle or a circle-with-dot; the latter being known as the 'eye' motif which was commonly employed in ancient times to ward off the 'evil eye'.

Some terracottas of this period betray unmistakable foreign influence, more especially that of the Perso-Hellenistic art. Noteworthy in this connection are two male heads from Basarh. Not only is their head-dress foreign, but the physiognomy and the expression as also the smooth and delicate modelling very clearly indicate the Perso-Hellenistic influence. Coomaraswamy¹⁸ sees Western Asiatic influence in the winged female figure from Basarh. The very same influence is also noticed in the court art of the imperial Mauryas. According to Stella Kramrisch¹⁹ the invasion of Pataliputra by Eukratides may have been instrumental in refreshing the knowledge of the Greek art of the Patna artist. This, however, took place later, but the foreign influence had infiltrated earlier under Chandragupta for reasons well known to history.

Sunga

The Sunga terracottas are found all over the north and eastern India. There is a noteworthy change in the technique too. Completely moulded plaques take the place of modelled figures, but not to their complete exclusion. The plaques are also provided with a perforation at the top for hanging on walls. In the earlier phase the examples show flattened forms but later, in course of time, the Sunga artist appears to have been successful in producing fine pieces modelled in bold relief and displaying refined, sensitive modelling. With experience the artist was able to regulate contours and the gradation of planes; consequently the linear rhythm also becomes more disciplined.

The Sunga plaques depict several secular subjects. They usually portray young women in the bloom of their youth, engaged in toilet, music and dance. They are buxom, almost voluptuous. They wear large, complicated head-dresses and are invariably loaded with jewellery consisting of heavy bangles and anklets, outsize ear-studs, rich necklaces composed of auspicious emblems (*asta-mangalaka haras*) and the gem-set girdles. Their heavy jewellery conceals, to some extent, the loveliness of their delicately modelled body. Several such plaques of great beauty have come from Kosam, including a limited group of erotic ones.





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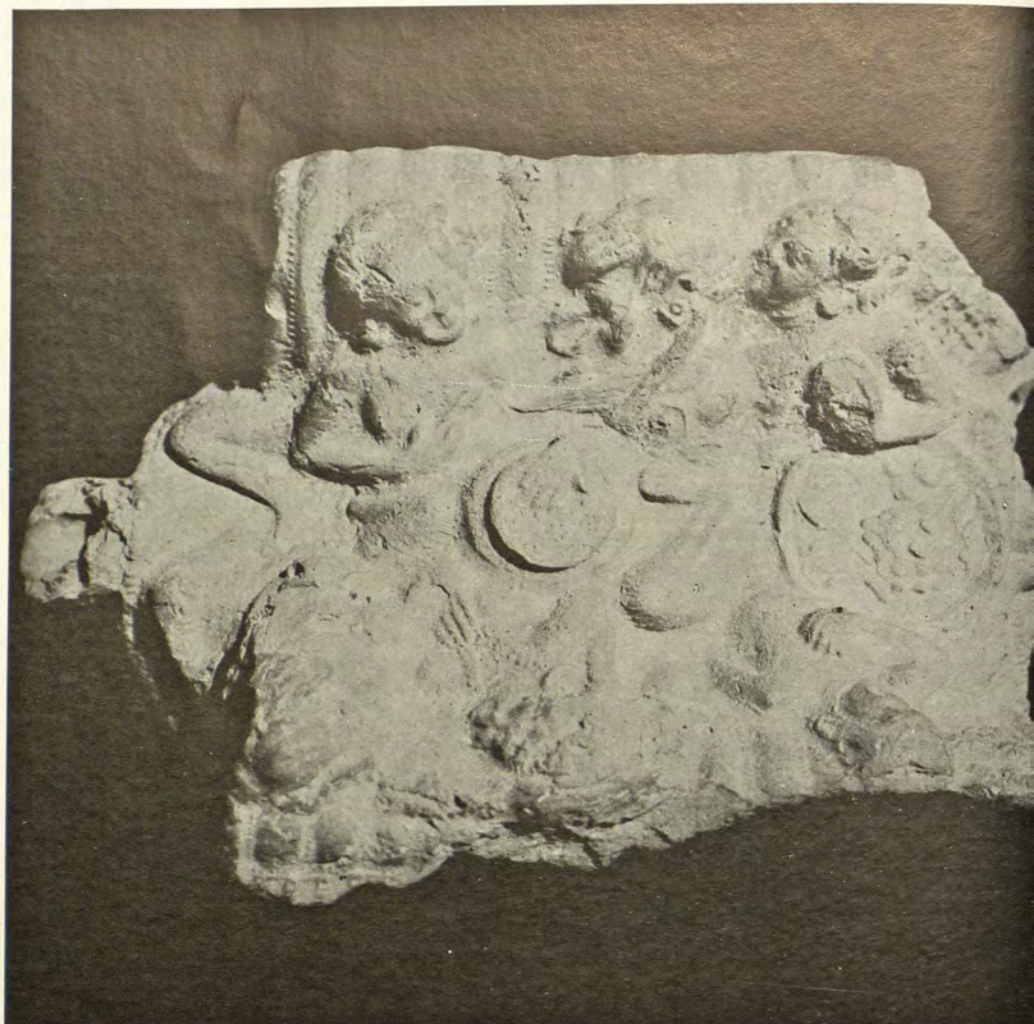
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9. *A female figurine from Bulandi Bagh. (Patna Museum)*
10. *A standing female figure from Patna. (Patna Museum)*
11. *A standing female figure from Bulandi Bagh. (Patna Museum)*

12. *A yakshi plaque from Mathura*
(Baroda Museum)
13. *Picnic party in bullock cart*
(Allahabad Museum)
14. *Toy cart ram* (Patna Museum)
15. *Toy cart makora* (Allahabad Museum)



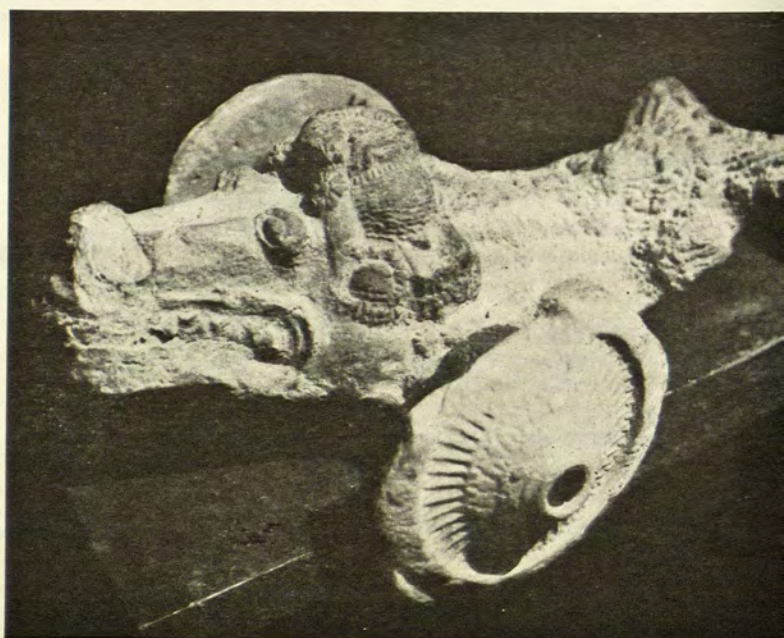
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A very significant feature of these ladies with elaborate coiffure and jewellery is that they are sometimes shown nude with the generative organ prominently indicated. It seems likely that they were connected with fertility cult. Another class of figures are the plaques showing amorous couples (*mithunas*) which, though rarely, are completely nude.

From now onwards, we have also terracottas which we can definitely identify as of gods and goddesses. Plaques showing Gajalakshmi, being bathed by two elephants flanking her, occur for the first time in this period.²⁰ Sometimes we also come across the representations of the goddess Sri, the Indian goddess of beauty. She is depicted on a plaque, famous as the Oxford Terracotta, which was supposed to have come from Kosam, but is possibly from Tamluk (Bengal)²¹. A goddess shown in some plaques has been identified by V. S. Agrawala as Vasudhara or Vasudha, a name of the goddess earth²² (Fig. 12). Her distinguishing attribute is the symbol of triple fish which is shown suspended from the string held in the right hand. This emblem again recurs in the stone images of Vasudhara in which a pair of jars is the distinguishing symbol. The fish is one of the eight auspicious symbols (*astamangalaka*) in Jainism and was thought to symbolise fertility and vegetative prosperity.

A very interesting terracotta plaque of this period has been found in the Punjab University's recent excavations at Sugh. The upper half of the plaque is missing but the lower one, which has survived, shows a child writing the alphabet on a board. The board is exactly similar to the wooden one used in the north today. The alphabets can be assigned, on palaeographical grounds, to c. 2nd century B.C.

Among the secular subjects, a somewhat common subject is a picnic party (Fig. 13). Besides, there are a number of animal toys for children (Figs. 14 and 15).

A very significant technical change occurs in this period, for a single mould is used on a very large scale in the production of terracottas. However, a period of transition is evident in the earlier figurines which were partly modelled by hand and partly pressed from mould. The body was handmade, whereas the head was moulded and then joined to the bust, the figurines still being in the round. The simple moulded plaque was perhaps a further logical development of this process. The rapid progress made by the Sunga artist in producing a large number of terracotta plaques was obviously due to the use of mould. Though mechanical productions, they are true works of art and some of them are among the finest specimens

of Indian art. The use of a single mould produced only flat plaques. This probably led to the use of double mould in the succeeding Satavahana period.

The Sunga art was truly the people's art in sharp contrast to the court art of the Imperial Mauryas. The plaques therefore naturally have their counterparts in the contemporary stone sculpture of Bharhut. Stylistically they are related, in their physiognomy and ornamentation, to those in stone sculpture. This relationship between the two plastic media is also observed in the succeeding Kushan and Gupta periods.

Satavahana

The terracotta art does not seem to have flourished in the Deccan and South India, except once under the Satavahanas in the centuries around the Christian era. In the south the only terracottas so far found are those from neolithic settlements and megalithic burials. The latter are extremely crude and primitive, and it is difficult to be precise about their age. But the Satavahana terracottas, on any showing, are the handiwork of gifted and skilful artists.

The Satavahana art flourished in their vast empire stretching from coast to coast and the important centres of production which have so far come to light are Ter, Nevasa, Kolhapur and Paithan in Maharashtra and Kondapur in Andhra Pradesh. The main difficulty the artist faced was the lack of rich fine clay; he had therefore to work in kaolin which, in plasticity and durability, was far superior to clay. The figurines are mostly secular but those with religious association also occur. The figures of male and female and children are characterized by bold and vigorous physiognomy and extremely sensitive modelling (Figs. 16 and 17). They are noted for their dynamic vitality and plastic simplicity of form. The toy animals show the skill in sympathetic portraiture of animal life. Sometimes we also come across persons who look like Romans. One such head from Ter has been rightly identified as forming a part of the typical suspension lamp of Roman origin.²³

A new class of figurines, rather plaques, depict a nude female figure, usually headless (Fig. 18). She obviously seems to be connected with fertility, and is supposed to be Graeco-Roman in inspiration.²⁴ Some indistinct Roman influence is also discernible in the terracotta figurines of children. The smiling boy from Nevasa has some relationship with his counterpart in a Roman terracotta found in the Grotto of Spertanga.²⁵

An outstanding Satavahana terracotta is a miniature Buddhist shrine recovered from Nevasa (Fig. 19). It depicts a tree in railing supporting a *bodhi-ghara* having *Salabhanjikas* in the cardinal directions. It is hollow from within and the marks on the interior clearly show that it was built up first by the 'ring' method and then the decoration on the exterior was executed. A somewhat similar shrine (*bodhi-ghara*) is to be seen in a Sanchi relief of first century B.C.²⁶ The tradition of portable shrines still persists but the Nevasa specimen is perhaps the only of its kind which has survived.

found all over their empire. There were two main centres, Mathura in the north and Taxila in the north-west. The various types and fashions represented in the terracotta art are a token of the racial influx that was characteristic of the period. The repertoire of Kushan terracottas is most varied (Figs. 20-23). The secular life, rich in social content, is reflected in the terracotta art. In these we meet noblemen with tall headgears, amorous couples (*mithunas*), musicians playing on various musical instruments, females in poses as alluring as those in stone sculptures and the mother-and-child groups.

6. A boy from Nevasa (Deccan College)

7. Two female heads from Nevasa (Deccan College)



17



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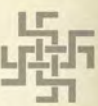
The Satavahana terracottas mark a distinct technological advance, for the technique employed in fashioning the figures is highly specialized and is different from that in the north. The artists were successful in producing hollow terracotta figures in the round. This was the result of a double mould, one for the front and the other for the back, and this is supposed to have been adopted in the early centuries of the Christian era as a result of contact with the Roman world²⁷. The Roman technique continued to be practised later in the Iksavaku period. But the tradition deteriorated under the Iksavakus in the third-fourth centuries as the terracottas from Nagarjunakonda²⁸ would testify, possibly because the Roman influence waned. They are made of inferior clay, full of impurities, and appear to be merely lifeless mechanical productions.

Kushan

The advent of the Kushan rule in the north marks the flowering of the Indian genius and its blending with the Graeco-Roman and there is therefore all round development in various fields of activity. The Kushan terracottas are

The terracottas with religious associations are far more interesting. A number of gods and goddesses of different religions came to be represented for the first time during this period. It certainly was due to the religious eclecticism of the rulers but also because of the advent of the *Bhakti* cult or the cult of the personal god. We have figurines of several Brahmanical and Buddhist deities among which the finest is a plaque showing Kamadeva within a flowery border²⁹. The god of love—Bhagvan Kusumadhvaja—is seen standing as a young man, decked with garlands of flowers as well as wreaths of mango leaves and sprig (*amra-manjari*) and holding ready the sheaf of invincible arrows and the tall bow.

Another rare form of great iconographical interest is that of the sun from Mathura³⁰. He is shown wearing the *udichya-vesa*—the dress of the northerner—consisting of full sleeved tunic (*varbana*), trousers (*svasthana*) and top boots. But it is unique on account of its wings which distinctly emphasize the early Vedic concept of the sub-bird. Another rare specimen is that of Hermes-Aphrodite from Rajghat³¹ which very possibly provided the



inspiration for the fashioning of the Ardhanarisvara form of Siva.

A noteworthy achievement of the Kushan artists was the modelling of complete figures of inordinately large size in the round. Among these the representations of Panchika and Hariti are quite frequent. Though coarse in rendering, they demonstrate a bold attempt and conception, and can be taken to be the predecessors of the life-size terracotta statues of the succeeding Gupta age.

The Kushan artists seem to have concentrated more on stone sculpture and consequently the

terracotta art received a setback as it was neglected. The terracottas of this period usually betray crude workmanship and the artist did not use the mould which was so commonly employed by the Sunga artists. The reversal to handmade forms does not seem to have been successful. However, there is some evidence to show that a mould was employed particularly for producing larger figures of which the busts were hand-modelled and the heads pressed out of moulds and provided with tenons. However, the figurines look coarser than Sunga plaques. This was undoubtedly due to the inferior quality of clay, full of grit and other impurities;

18. *Nagnakabandha* from *Ter* (Maharashtra) (Deccan College)

19. *Caitya shrine* from *Nevasa* (Deccan College)



18



19



20

20. A standing female figure
(Lucknow Museum)

21. A female head. (Lucknow
Museum)

22. A three-headed female figure
(Lucknow Museum)



21



22

it is often enough found to be mixed with chopped husk. The baking also does not seem to be uniform; the section in several cases shows that the fire did not reach the core. The figures frequently have a deep red slip, rather crude and sometimes painted also. Two fragments from Mathura (now in the Patna Museum) show traces of silver and gold.

Gandhara

Another important centre of the Kushan terracottas was Taxila which stylistically represents a different school of art known as the Gandhara school. It is characterised by overwhelming Hellenistic influence. The subjects portrayed are purely Hellenistic in the beginning and later an admixture of Indian, Hellenistic and Central Asian which were all due to the location of the region which was the meeting place of different cultures. In the final phases of the school the Indian element becomes predominant. Yet in all the different stages of development, there is unmistakable Hellenistic influence and the blending of the Hellenistic plasticity with Indian motifs has produced some of the finest specimens of Indian art.

The terracotta figurines of men and women, which form a distinct group, appear to portray Greeks or Graeco-Romans. This is also evident from the physiognomy and expression as also the treatment of the hair, beard and moustaches. With the process of Indianization, there appears a group of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and lay personages who look every inch Indian but the Hellenistic modelling distinguishes them from their Mathura counterparts. The production increases and the Gandhara influence infiltrates into Kashmir, but its echoes become feeble by the time they reach the Bikaner region in Rajasthan.

Gupta

The Gupta period has rightly been styled as the 'golden age' in Indian history. The epoch witnessed a sudden outburst of activity in all the different fields of human endeavour and is marked by the flowering of the Indian genius. The Gupta artists have left for us in their handiwork some of the finest artistic creations which undoubtedly constitute the glorious heritage of humanity. The terracotta art travelled with the political power and even beyond, and the Gupta terracottas are therefore found over a large part of India. However, the most prolific centres are in north, in the Ganga-Yamuna doab, but some of the finest examples have also been reported from north-west and east and also from Central India.

With the introduction of religious structures of stone and brick as well, the Gupta period witnesses a tremendous activity in brick constructions. This, in turn, gave a fillip to the productions of terracotta art which came to be fashioned on a scale hitherto unknown.

The brick structures were adorned with large terracotta panels depicting many gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, as also mythological scenes from the epics and *puranas* (Fig. 24). Apart from the usual categories, the terracottas also now came to be employed in architectural decoration comprising carved and moulded bricks and tiles with human, bird and vegetal motifs (Figs. 25 and 26). Some of the finest examples of this class have been found at Brahmanabad and Mirpurkhas (Sind), Nagari and Bikaner (Rajasthan), Bhitargaon (U.P.) and Mahasthan and Paharpur (Bengal). There is a great correspondence between terracotta productions and the contemporary stone sculpture.

The production of the terracottas of human and animal forms and also the images of gods and goddesses was truly prolific in the Gupta period. The smaller objects were produced mechanically from moulds. The secular subjects comprise mostly human figures, male and female (*dampati*), amorous couples (*mithunas*) and plaques showing scenes from daily life. Some of the male and female heads of this period are so charming that one wonders at the skill of the artist who fashioned them (Figs. 27, 28 and 29). They are particularly interesting on account of the different fashions of costume, coiffure and head-dresses they exhibit and also the exquisite jewellery. Very probably their wig-like head-dress is of Roman origin. Yet the most outstanding characteristic feature of these figures is the expression on their face, a quality which also distinguishes the contemporary stone sculpture. Among the men and women, we also come across people from Persia and Central Asia whose influx in the population introduced new ethnic types. They can be identified on account of their dress. They must have been mixing freely among the local populace and hence they came to be represented in the art.

The smaller plaques depicting scenes from daily life appear to have been pressed from moulds and they have a hole at the top for suspension. The women portrayed in terracottas no doubt present us the ideal of beauty; they almost appear to be the *nayikas* of classical poets (Fig. 30). The daily life depicted in plaques is also that of aristocracy, the cream of the Gupta society, and it is thus the world of Kalidasa that we see in them.

Some of the Gupta terracotta figures are also painted with colours. However, only a few of these still preserve the traces of paint. Marshall found several painted terracottas in his excavation at Bhita (U.P.). He observes that, "All are mechanical reproductions from moulds a few of which were found but duplicates in the collection are rare. Some of the figures are without slip or paint, others are painted in monochrome-red or yellow, for instance, a variety of colours—red and pink and yellow,

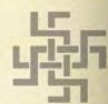


23. Two female heads
(Patna Museum)





24. Brick showing a scene from the
Ramayana (Patna Museum)



and white^{32''}. Kalidasa also refers to a painted terracotta figure of peacock³³.

Terracotta images of gods and goddesses of the Gupta period have been found at several sites. Among these the most remarkable are the heads of Siva and Parvati from Ahichchhatra. The extremely sensitive modelling has rendered luminosity to their faces and the gracefully divine Parvati reminds us of the graphic description of her beauty in the *Kumara-sambhavam*. Equally noteworthy are the almost lifesize statues of Ganga and Yamuna which, once adorned the main approach to the terraced temple of Siva at Ahichchhatra, whereas a tiny one—Brahma seated on a lotus—was found at Pondicherry^{33a}. This originally formed part of the Shesashayi figure. But for a few exceptions, it appears that the spiritual experience in terracottas is less intense than it is in stone sculpture.

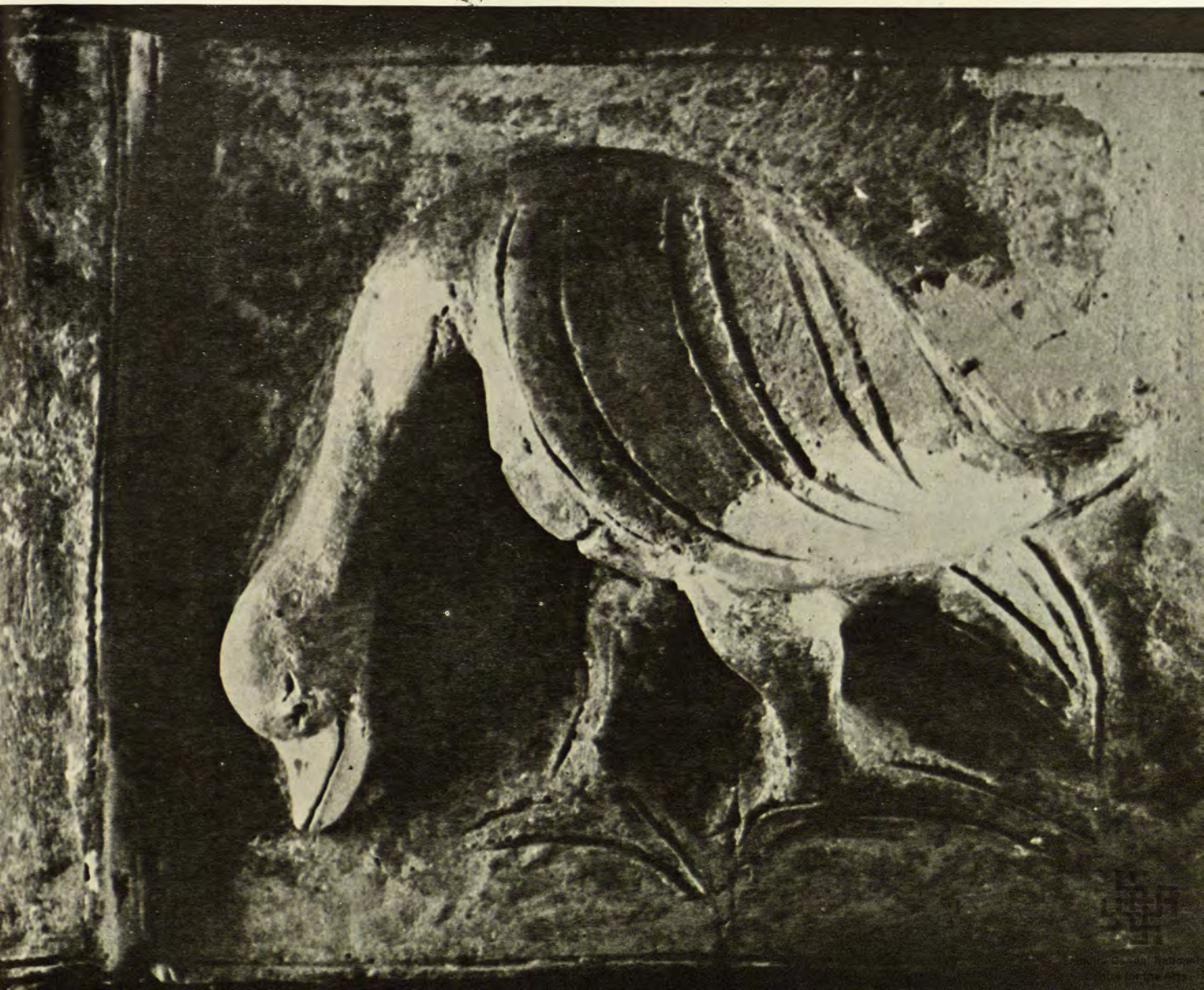
A variety of animals appear in the terracotta plaques from Paharpur and they are also

equally skilfully rendered. The Gupta artist also finds a new medium in pottery for his artistic expression. The variety of stamped and decorated pottery of the Gupta period is indeed surprising. There are several decorative patterns such as floral, geometric, vegetal and animal. The pots are also provided with equally graceful handles and animal spouts, particularly the crocodile-shaped (*makara-mukha-pranalika*).

Mediaeval

The decline of the Gupta power sets in degeneration in the artistic activity of the country. This is especially true of the terracotta art which in the post-Gupta and the mediaeval periods remains confined only to Bengal and Bihar in eastern India. Besides, a small centre flourished in Kashmir. Elsewhere in the country there is no terracotta art worth the name. This was undoubtedly due to the times of stress and strain because of internecine wars between rival chiefs and later, the onslaught of the Muslims.

25. A decorated brick showing swan from Nagari. (Deccan College)





26. *Decorated bricks showing a male and a female from Nagari (Deccan College)*

26

- 27. *A male head (Patna Museum)*
- 28. *A female head (Allahabad Museum)*
- 29. *A female head (Allahabad Museum)*



27



28



29

30. *A female figure from Pir-Sultan-
ki-Theri (Rajasthan) (Bikaner
Museum.)*





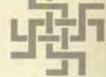
31. *Terracotta heads from Akhnur (Kashmir).*

The most prolific centre of the post-Gupta terracotta art was Paharpur (East Bengal), where the terracotta sculpture was interwoven with monumental architecture³⁴. It is a most voluminous work in brick and terracotta in the sub-continent. The temple complex at this place contained about 2000 terracotta plaques *in situ* and about 800 were found in the excavations. They are dated from 8th to 10th century but the manufacturing of the plaques seems to have continued for a couple of centuries more. The plaques depict human and animal motifs and besides there are a number of divine figures of Buddhist and Brahmanical deities. But most interesting are the plaques depicting Indian fables. "The terracotta and stone panels from Paharpur," observes Stella Kramrisch, "belong to two distinct traditions; the one, numerically in the minority, is an eastern and provincial version of contemporary sculpture in Madhyadesa, but the other is an undiluted and indigenous eastern Indian contribution."³⁵ The expressive quality of the plaques is rather crude and one can definitely notice the decline in the terracotta art. Very similar terracotta plaques were found at Dah Parbatiya (Assam) which show a very close connection between the mediaeval art of Bengal and Assam. Slightly different in style but belonging to the same age are those from Kundilnagar (Assam).

An early mediaeval Indian school of the terracotta art was in Kashmir from where we

have some of the most charming terracottas of the reign of Lalitaditya Muktapida (700-736)³⁶. Most of them are from Akhnur and Ushkar (ancient Huviskapura) near Baramula (Varahamula) where Lalitaditya had founded a monastery about A.D. 720. The terracotta heads were found in the excavations along the whole length of walls. They were fired separately in a kiln and attached with wooden pegs. They bear a very close resemblance with the latest Gandhara stucco reliefs and at the same time also inherit the Gupta charm (Figs. 31 and 32). As Rowland observes, "The heads of Buddhas, Bhodhisattvas and lay personages from this and other 8th century sites are in a style equivalent to the last phase of Gandhara sculpture in which the classical types have been endowed with a certain sensuousness and warmth by the infiltration of the Indian Gupta style. Actually the nearest equivalent for this phase of Kashmir sculpture is to be found in the semi-classical, semi-Indian figurines in terracotta from the 7th century monastery of Fondukistan in Afghanistan."³⁷

With the advent of the Muslim rule in India it was neither desirable nor possible to erect religious edifices and that too in clay. Consequently all artistic activity then comes to a grinding halt. We witness some isolated attempts here and there and among these we find a great monument in eastern India in the



tradition of Paharpur. The Mathurapur Deul³⁸ (District Faridpur, Bengal), though damaged to a great extent, is an imposing structure built in 1665. It is adorned with purely ornamental patterns as also human, animal and vegetal motifs. They display a dynamic vitality and plastic simplicity of form. They are extremely interesting because they embody plastic designs of the pre-Muslim as also the post-Muslim influences. Some scenes are marked by descriptive realism and representation of detail in them is indeed awe-inspiring. This is very much in evidence in the 'Kirtan' scene. The rendering of animals shows great skill in sympathetic portraiture of animal life, particularly in the spirited movement. In the plaques showing hunting scenes we meet Hindu and Muslim potentates while Portuguese soldiers are also seen in some panels. They are all rendered with great skill.

Epilogue

The foregoing survey of different schools brings into relief the rich variety of the terracotta art of India. The specimens that have survived through centuries are but only a part

of the entire collection; innumerable pieces still lie buried deep in ancient mounds. Many more must have been destroyed and some also immersed after ritualistic use as is done even in our own times. The art has survived the vicissitudes of history and exists till today among the urban and the village folk as well. A variety of images of gods and humans and animals are still fashioned in clay and are discarded after use.

A proper history of the development of the terracotta art in India has yet to be written. Notwithstanding the vast collections that lie deposited in our museums, the story of the evolution of the clay art is inadequately documented; there are still several missing links in the story. We have as yet no specimens of the earliest stages and the 'dark age' is darker so far as the terracottas are concerned. The 'Timeless' types and the figurines from south Indian megalithic burials still hang in a chronological vacuum. The findspots of several outstanding specimens are as yet unknown; those from older excavations are often enough not recorded precisely. Even the recent excavations, known for their scientific methodology, have failed to a considerable extent in providing a firmer chronological basis for the

32. *Sleeping beauty from Akhnur.*



terracottas. As far as the terracottas are concerned, there is only one stratum in our excavations which lumps the three most important schools—the Sunga, the Kushan and the Gupta—into one phase. Even the most charming Mauryan dancing girls have to go hand in hand with the most inarticulate female figures—the so-called “Timeless” types—which are decidedly older. The dynastic affiliations may not be valid for cultural phases, but they have their utility in the phases of art for the sake of easy identification or grouping and also for the growth of the social and religious ideas such as miniature stupas, figures of gods and goddesses and female figures with varied coiffure and dress as of those from Bikaner.

The distribution of findspots amply bears out the fact that the terracottas followed the political power; but culture transcends all political barriers and the terracottas therefore also occur in areas which were not under the direct sphere of influence. This explains the occurrence of Sunga terracottas at Taxila and the lingering Gupta charm in the terracottas from Fondukistan.

The rich and varied content of the terracottas should convince us that this art was not the monopoly of the poor man only but was the medium of art expression of all the classes of society including the royalty. Kalidasa refers to a prince playing with a clay toy and Bana

tells us of emperor Harsha who employed artists to make terracottas.

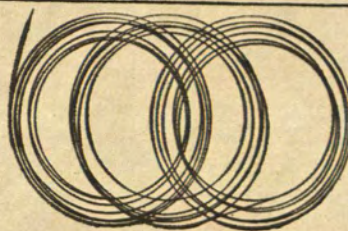
The terracotta art flourished in this land to such extent that it hardly has parallels elsewhere. An important factor which contributed to its rapid development was the use of terracotta sculpture in architectural edifices. Not only did the large terracotta panels of gods and goddesses and men and women adorn the structures but even the architectural members were made of clay. Moulded bricks (*chitrini istikah*) are referred to in the *Jaiminiya Sutra*³⁹, and Sabara in his *Bhasya* quotes the *Taittiriya Aranyaka*⁴⁰ taking back the antiquity of moulded bricks to the Vedic times. Unfortunately remains of such an early period have not survived the ravages of time and man.

Another important aspect of the clay art has rightly been pointed out by Coomaraswamy who observes that they are “important not only as documents of the religious culture but as documents of the history of art.”⁴¹ For the prehistoric religion we have to depend to a considerable extent on the terracotta figures, human and animal as well. Even for the historical period the terracotta representations of deities of various pantheons are equally important for the simple reason that the people of this land—the Hindus, the Buddhists, and the Jainas—were devout image-worshippers. Even today clay images are made in hundreds on special occasion for worship.

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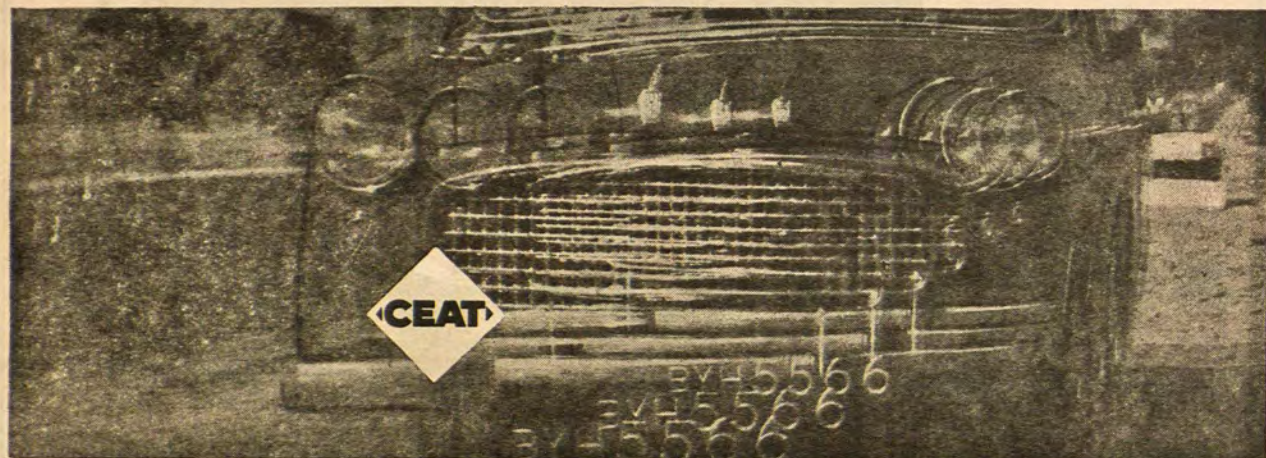


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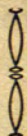
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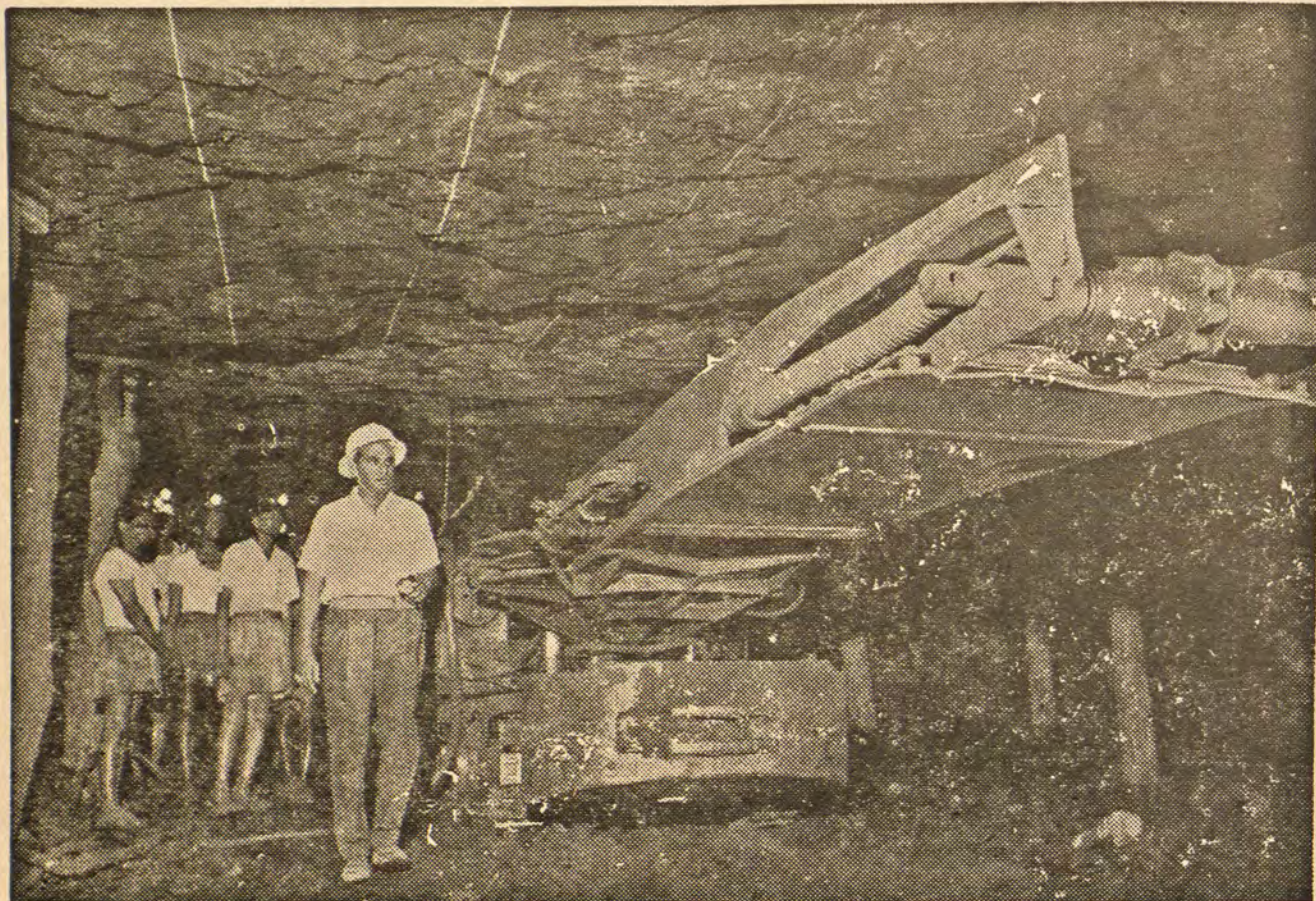
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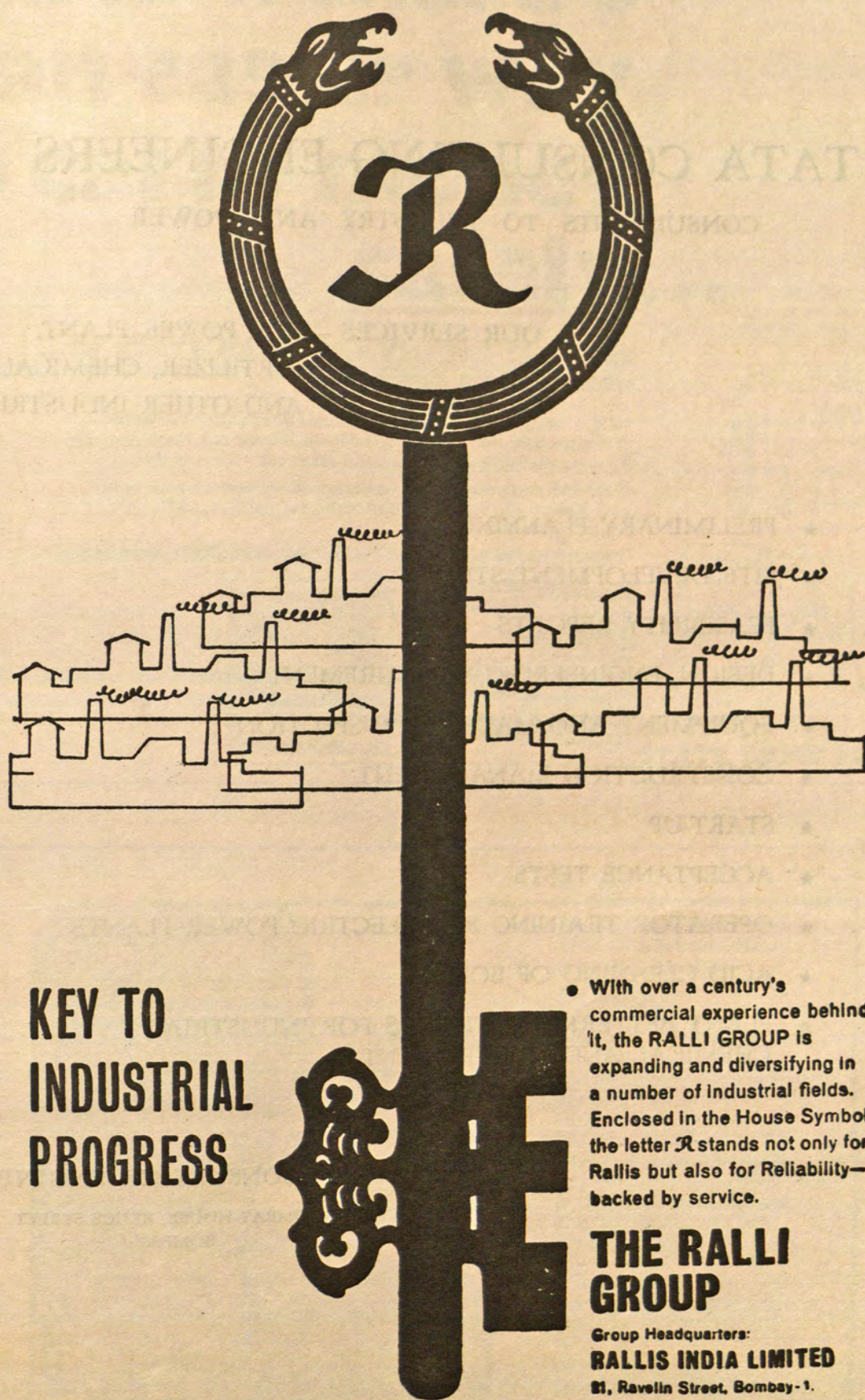
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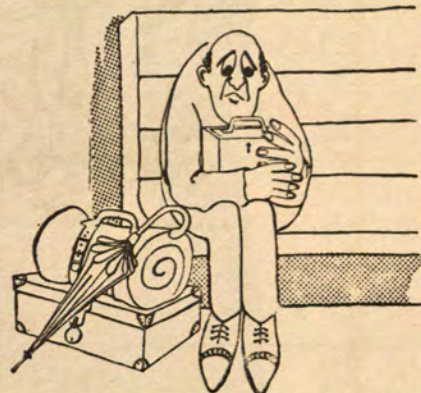
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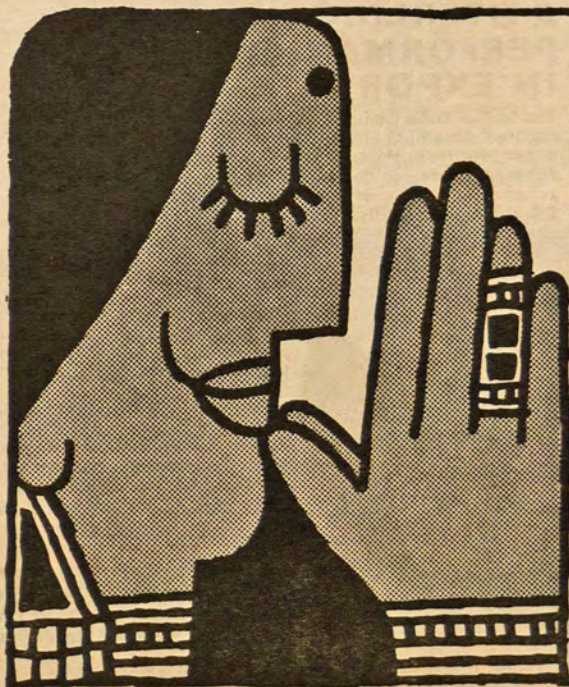
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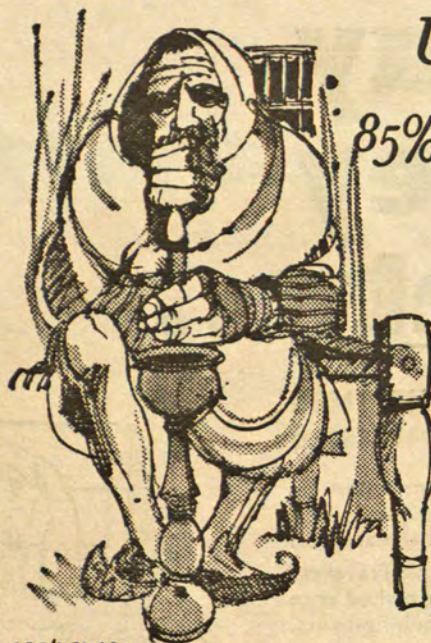
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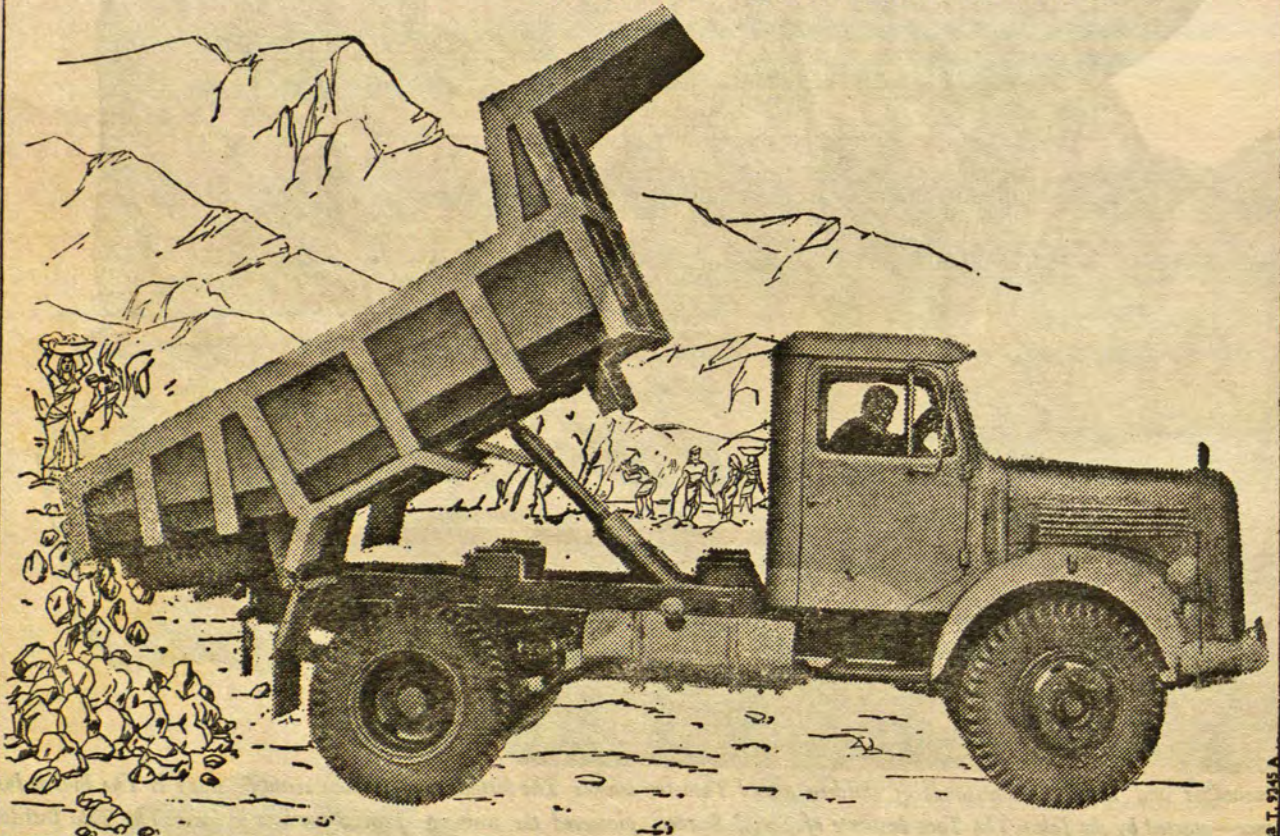
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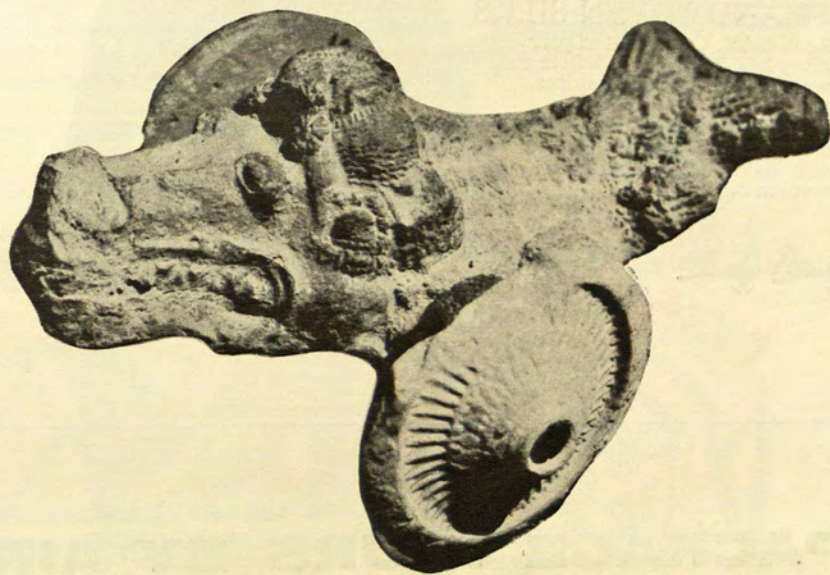


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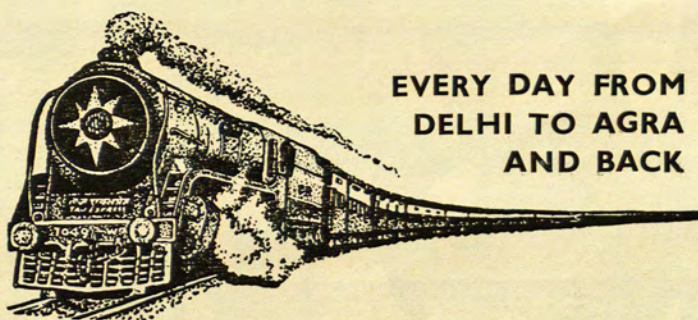


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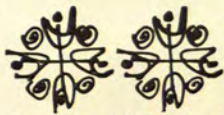


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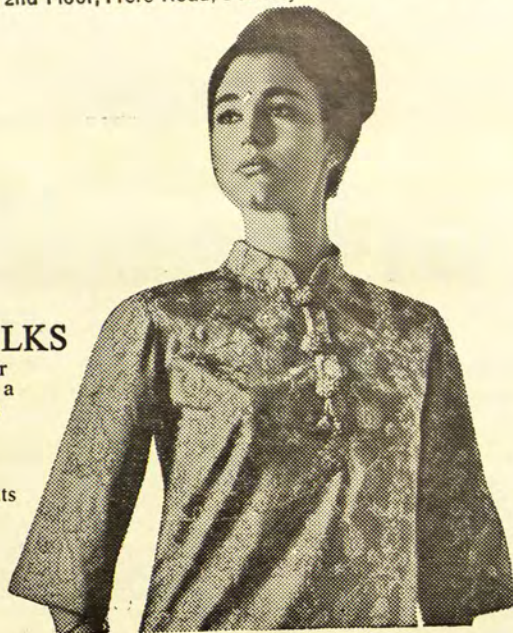
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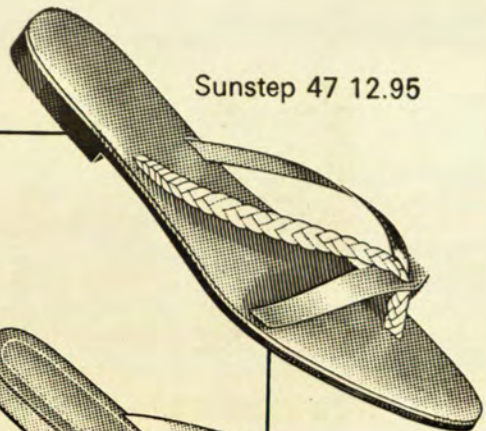
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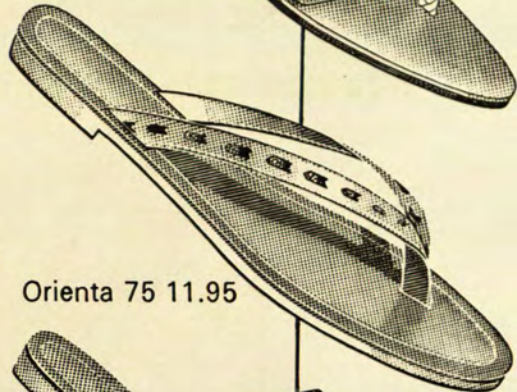


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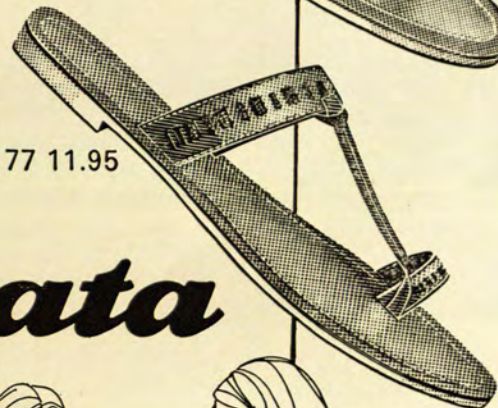
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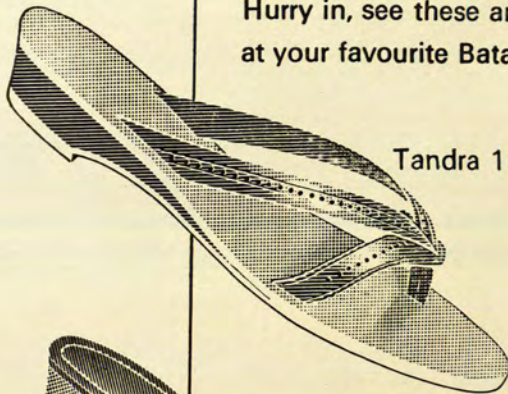
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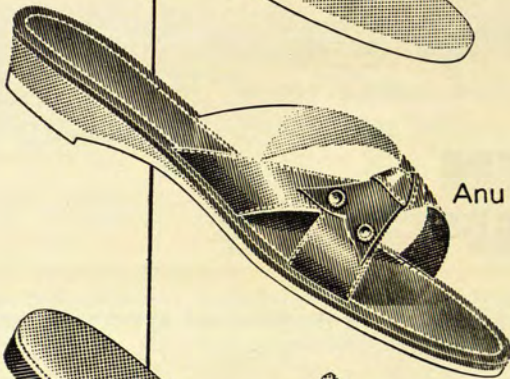
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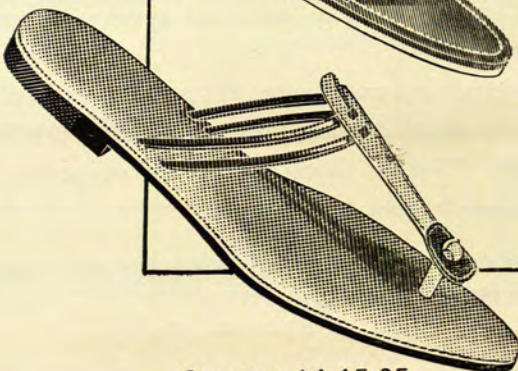
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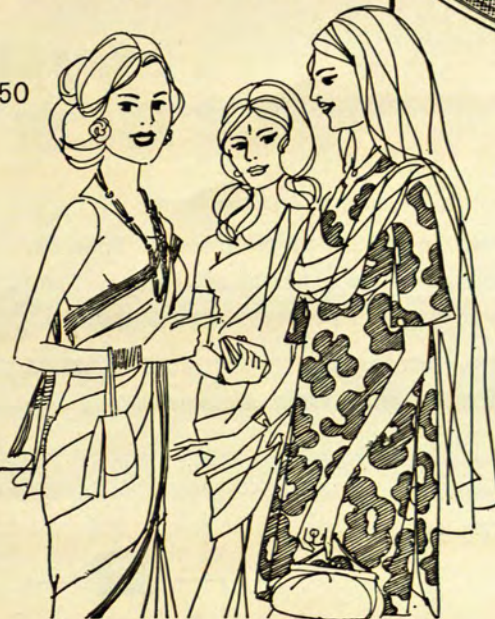


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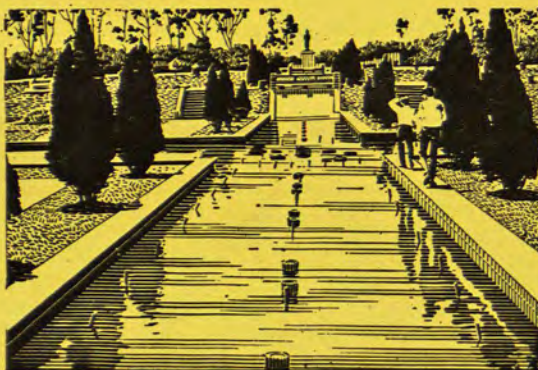
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Supplement to Vol. XXIII, No. 1 December 1969



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A Gift from William Morris

by John Irwin

"If Indian art represents any living creature," wrote Ruskin, "it represents that creature under some distorted and monstrous form. To all the facts and forms of nature it wilfully and regularly opposes itself." The obtuseness of Victorian critics towards Indian art is often explained on the grounds that they had never seen the real thing. Their opinions are said to have been based on the crudities brought home by the curio-collector and by those with a special eye for the bizarre and grotesque. Today, however, this explanation seems inadequate. Fresh discoveries in unexpected quarters, year by year, show that a surprising number of fine works also reached England in the 19th century,¹ which makes it clear that what the Victorians really lacked was not the opportunity to see good examples but the willingness to look at them objectively.

The inhibition was basically a moral one. The deities and modes of worship characteristic of Hinduism seemed to them debased and often repulsive—not least the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, should bow in worship before the image of a monkey or a cow. The science of anthropology was in its infancy, and the science of psychology was still in the future. Without technical experience of evaluating unfamiliar patterns of culture it was all too easy to recognise "the Savage" in the bizarre and the grotesque. Since Indian religious worship seemed degrading, and since almost all Indian art existed to serve that end, it followed that the sculptured monuments of India were without intrinsic virtue and therefore beyond the pale of rational study. This attitude was neatly summed up in the official handbook to the Indian collections at the South Kensington Museum in 1880: "The monstrous shapes for the Puranic [i.e. Hindu] deities are unsuitable for the higher forms of artistic representation: that is possibly why sculpture and painting are unknown, as fine arts, in India."

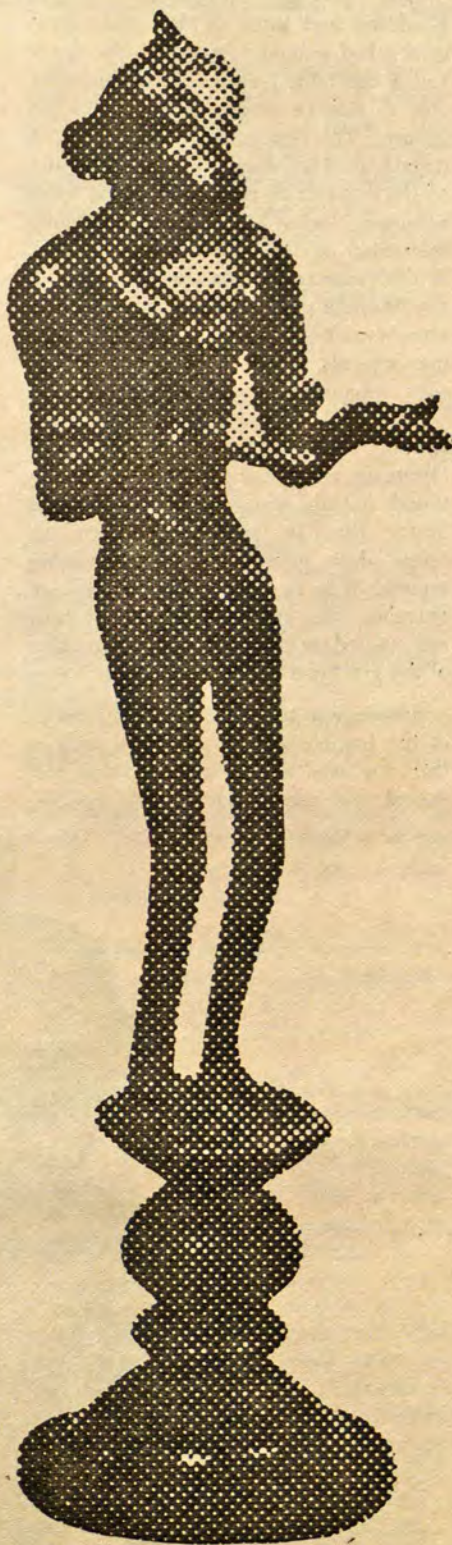


Figure 1. Hanuman. Bronze (cire perdue).
From Ceylon late 13th or early 14th century A.D.

Among the very few who ignored this prejudice and preferred instead to trust to their visual perception was William Morris. As early as 1869 he gave to the South Kensington Museum its first outstanding work of Indian art—a gift which apparently evoked neither gratitude nor recognition during his lifetime, but which is rewarded today by an important place in the Museum's primary collection.² The figure in question (Figure 1) is a bronze *cire-perdue* image of the "monkey-god" Hanuman. Date and provenance are not absolutely certain, but at the time of its presentation it was said to have come from Ceylon. In spite of the fact that no other bronze quite like it has been found in Ceylon, this claim is plausible. It is related in style to the well-known Tamil tradition of bronze-casting which flourished under the South Indian Chola dynasty between the 11th and 13th century, yet it is distinct from that tradition, and could well have been the work of a second or third generation Tamil emigrant craftsman. Taking the 13th century as one of the main periods of Tamil penetration into Ceylon, this encourages a tentative attribution to the late 13th or early 14th century.

Looking at this figure today, it is difficult to imagine how the mind of the man who conceived it could even in the most sheltered Victorian circles have been regarded as brutalised or degraded. Its message is subtle, and rather than suggesting debasement of man to the level of a monkey it elevates the animal to human sensibility and tells of a divine essence in all living things.

Hanuman, hero of the *Ramayana* epic, is the Hindu arch-type of faithful service. By his super-human powers he helped Rama to defeat the army of demons. Although a particular and very special monkey, he embodies the ubiquitous monkey character. He is the universal monkey invested with the aura of human myth, and, in portraying him, the Hindu artist has subtly suggested links between human and animal life without the least trace of sentimental overtone. [The

firmness and skill of execution prohibit sentimentality. No attempt is made to disguise the purely monkey qualities of mischievousness and latent venom; at the same time the figure is instinct with the human virtues of tenderness and humility.

He stands with hands outstretched in the gesture of holding out an object now missing (possibly a tray bearing the sandals of Rama). The long tapering legs, slightly flexed at the knees, and the attenuated waist and thighs, emphasise the character of humility and pathos, while the sensitive modelling of the hump of the back, and the smooth roundness of the pate with its neatly encompassing hair-style, lend benignity and benevolence (Figure 2). Animality, on the other hand, is expressed in the muzzle with its fierce canine teeth, and to a lesser extent in the prehensile feet. There are signs that it once had a tail, now missing. Although humanised, the figure embodies acute observation of nature, and anyone familiar with Indian fauna will recognise the unmistakable features of a particular monkey species known as genus *Macaca* (which includes the well-known Rhesus). Where the artist departs from the naturalistic—as in the treatment of the wide-open eyes, the sweeping eyebrows (ignoring the low, overhanging prehensile brow), and the genitals—he does so deliberately, in order to reinforce its human associations.

Although widely venerated in village-India, Hanuman's place in mythology is closer to that of a folk-hero than a "god" in the normal sense of that term. The story of his divine parentage as son of Vayu, Vedic god of the wind, in union with a monkey, is clearly an afterthought of the Brahmin priesthood, anxious to give him a semblance of orthodox divinity. In reality his origin is probably totemic, and his exploits against demons much older than Brahmanism. The elephant, the humped-bull and the monkey are pre-eminently the animals of India, and the imaginative perception the Indian artist has at all times expressed in the depiction of them shares a common source with the age-old Indian folk-belief in reincarnation—with its idea that in another life the individual may be re-born in animal form.

One of the differences between Hinduism and most of the other great established religions is that India never had a centralised ecclesiastical authority able to enforce orthodoxy or stamp out heresy. This explains the absence of dogma in Hinduism and the difficulty of the outsider in reconciling what must ultimately seem irreconcilable among numerous myths, deities and beliefs. It also helps to explain the ambiguity of the Brahmin priesthood to such basically non-Aryan or pre-Aryan practices as the monkey-cult, which was tolerated rather than encouraged (and tolerated only because of the strength of its hold on the popular imagination): Shrines to Hanuman are usually poor and to be found outside villages, or at least no nearer than its gates, and when his image does gain entry to a Brahmin temple, it is in the subservient role of attendant to Rama who is in turn rationalised theologically as an incarnation of the great god Vishnu.

Bronze was too expensive for patrons of the humble shrine: an image such as this one was almost certainly commissioned for use in a Vishnu temple.

(If he had been holding a tray with the sandals of Rama, as already suggested, this would have confirmed the subservient role.) Yet to the artist-craftsman who made it, the subject of Hanuman possibly had a more personal meaning than that of the major deity. The result is a work of art which expresses both the essence of a myth and the intense personal feeling of an individual towards the figure embodying it. This identification is rare in Indian art, and the fact that we possess such a striking example in the collections should be remembered in homage to William Morris.

NOTES

¹ A recent discovery is the fine 11th-century sculpture of a Jain mother-goddess from Orissa which remained in obscurity in Scotland for many years before its acquisition by the Museum (I. S. 61-1963).

² No connection between William Morris and Ceylon is known. But his connections with India at this period included friendship with Wilfrid Heeley, who joined the East India Company service in 1855. His firm was associated with the Sir Jamsetji Jijibhai School of Art in Bombay, to which specimens were sent. For several years the firm imported and sold Indian wares. (I am grateful to Mr. R. C. H. Briggs, Honorary Secretary of the William Morris Society, for this information.)



Indian Aesthetics and Art Activity

Heritage of Vedic Culture

Bulletin of Ancient History and Archaeology

SEMINAR ON INDIAN AESTHETICS AND ART ACTIVITY

The Seminar on *INDIAN AESTHETICS AND ART ACTIVITY* which was organised by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study at Simla, in 1966 has now been reproduced in a handsome volume by the Institute. It is not possible to review such a book as there are important contributions in each of the papers contributed by various art historians, critics, and artists. The Seminar discussed the main theme under following heads: (a) The Fundamental Postulates, Traditional Aesthetics and their relevance to Art Activity in India through the ages; (b) Contemporary Aesthetic thinking in India and their relevance to the Contemporary Art Situation in the Country; (c) Comparative Aesthetics in Art Activity; (d) Modern Movements in World Art and their implications for Aesthetic Theories.

If one may generalise the trend of discussion, it may be fairly said that, though there were many schools of aesthetic theory in ancient and mediaeval India, the basic concept of *Rasa*, *Dhvani*, *Bhava* etc. were imported into the discussion of the fine arts from the Aesthetics of poetics and drama and architecture. The plastic and pictorial arts were often considered to be minor arts, incidental to architecture. Only in the classical Renaissance did Lalit Kala come into its own as on a par with the other creative expressions. Dr. Krishnamurti, Dr. Anand Krishan, Shri Barlingay, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayana all draw upon Bharata Natya Shastra and the various treatises of criticism of drama or music to derive their terms of reference.

This revelation made the application of the old terminology somewhat odd, when the scholars began to discuss contemporary aesthetic thinking. There was much aesthetic thinking, but no one could prove the relevance of theories of beauty to concrete works.

So when the contemporary artists entered the fray, there was naturally much dissatisfaction, because the present-day practitioners felt that the old theories had no significance for present-day expressions in painting and sculpture. In fact, the observations of one artist, Shri Ram Kumar, face to face with all aesthetic theories were summed up in the phrase: "BIG WORDS".

The only serious attempts at some hypothesis towards aesthetic were made briefly by the Director of the Seminar, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, who felt that we should evolve new aesthetic viewpoints from within contemporary works on the basis of the suggestions implicit on the works of the various experimentalists; and by Prof. Nihar Ranjan Ray, who actually put down some basic postulates for such an experimental aesthetic.

S. A.

HERITAGE OF VEDIC CULTURE

by Satyavrata Siddhantalankar & S. J. Taraporevala. Published by D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd.

Prof. Satyavrata Siddhantalankar was naturally nominated to Parliament by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, because they both belong to the band of interpreters of Hindu philosophy.

As far as it goes, this book is clear, efficient and a more popular presentation of what is called 'Vedic Culture' than most books of its kind. This popular appeal may be due to the knowledge of English of Miss Taraporevala.

Unfortunately, the preference of Schopenhauer, Sir William Jones and Max Muller, for the idealistic strains of Hindu thought, gave undue importance to the ideology of the few in ancient India as against the life and practice of the many. This has led to the belief that transcendentalism is India's main philosophy, which is certainly not true.

Any honest appraisal of the various points of view, would bring out the

Darshanas which don't rely entirely on the mystical test.

We hope that the publishers will also present, on a par with this and other books on orthodox Hindu religion, some interpretations of Buddhism, Jainism and the Lokayata schools of Indian thought, as well as of Islamic thought and Sikhism, so that the new generations can choose between the relevant ideas of the past for the compulsions of the present.

The current shift of emphasis, away from thinking exclusively of the Brahminical oligarchies to comparative estimates of all the religions may lead to more pragmatic presentations, of the essences of Indian culture than this one-sided 'pragmatic presentation'.

BULLETIN OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY—No. 1 (1967)

Edited by Prof. K. D. Bajpai, Department of Ancient Indian History, University of Saugar, M.P., India.

This is a welcome addition to the research in Ancient Indian History and Archaeology. Prof. Bajpai has had long experience of ancient art specially of the Kushan period, while he was curator of the Mathura Museum. His range of Sanskrit studies is fairly wide and he has absorbed the previous works of Coomaraswamy, V. S. Agarwala, Moti Chandra, Bannerji and Nihar Ranjan Ray.

The collaborators he has gathered together for historical research have been discriminately chosen. The articles on Indra by Prof. Bajpai, on the Western School of Mediaeval Indian Painting by R. N. Misra, on hunting scenes in Indian rock paintings by S. K. Panday, stand out for original thinking and interpretation.

We would like to suggest that the whole attitude towards ancient Indian art studies is baulked by the absence in the scholars of any apperception of the social history of the olden times. We know that there is not much written material available to indicate the motivations for changes in mythology, the



emphasis on certain customs and beliefs and the transformation of religion itself to suit the opportunism of the Brahminical priestcraft. Prof. Bajpai's contribution about the change of attitude from the exaltation of the Soma drinking, beef eating Vedic God Indra, to the worship of Krishna, in the late pre-Christian centuries, is illuminating. But it would be more fruitful if he had read Prof. Kosambi's interpretation of various episodes of our past culture. The sentimental reverence for the 'Cultural heritage' must disappear. The social facts behind the values of each period must be studied. And then we may inherit what is relevant for us from tradition. The unqualified worship of tradition in our country has always inhibited innovation for centuries. The new internationalist era, when all civilisations, ancient and modern, are in question cannot emerge into the 21st century without devastating rational analysis of the ancient and mediaeval idiocies. (The word idiot is here used in the Greek sense of going round and round in a circle).

M. R. A.

CULTURAL TRENDS IN MEDIAEVAL INDIA by H. K. Sherwani

Published by Asia Publishing House under the auspices of the Heras Institute of Indian History & Culture—Rs. 15/-

Prof. Sherwani is one of the few surviving doyens of Indian historical research, specially dealing with the Deccan. After assiduous work for many years, he seems to have acquired a tolerant outlook about the conflicts in history. This attitude is reinforced by his bias in favour of integration. As a vague Nationalist Muslim, he wishes to integrate the outlooks of the two communities, so passionately, that he often slurs over the reasons for the conflicts. For instance, he

nowhere indicates in these lectures, why, if there was an ever-present assimilation in cultural matters of Muslim and Hindu forms, did the separatist Muslim League succeed in sweeping so many Muhammadans off their feet to pursue the myth of the theocratic revivalist state of Pakistan. We wish that his genuine admirable belief in the need for integration today had been refurbished rather by deeper analysis of the process of cultural development, in terms of confrontation and conflict, so that his description of the 'mutual appreciation and assimilation' might have been more fruitful. May we suggest that the synthesis at least in the arts, was mostly in spite of confrontation and conflict, in fact without conflict, but for pragmatic reasons, which do not obey historical laws.

This entails the recognition by Prof. Sherwani of the fact that what he calls assimilation is really a living process, which always goes on despite political events. A Hindu craftsman will inevitably bring his traditional skill in temple building, his temperamental bias for certain forms and colours and his biological proclivities to his task when he builds for a Muslim patron. Also, the Indian Muslim craftsman was, more often than not, a Hindu converted to Islam rather than a foreigner from Central Asia, Arabia or Iran.

The truth is that *political periods* carry hangovers from the past and are *frequently not parallel with cultural developments*.

Prof. Sherwani knows that the Qwwat-ul-Islam mosque, the first Muslim construction, is the crude result of a confrontation, in so far as it was hurriedly put together out of indigenous materials from temples as against the far finer *Arahi-din-ki-Jhonpri* at Ajmer, which was thought out, designed and carried out with care.

Prof. Sherwani has given us a very *smooth*, general narrative, full of goodwill, a kind of broad outline, which will

have to be filled in with more details by new scholars and art historians in full view of all the awkward political and historical facts.

His account of the development of painting in the mediaeval period curiously begins with a quotation from the Russian writer, Sosenburg, published in 1931, and not from the more knowledgeable analysis of aspects of the Pathan phase by Prof. Nihar Rajan Ray, W. G. Archer, and Basil Gray. In fact, he doesn't mention the fine shades or nuances in synthesis between the Jain painting of the Kalpasutras and the Turko-Persian influences, in Gujarat or Malwa. The important document of the *Nimat Namah* of Mandu, which influenced the Deccani Kalams, as well as Rajasthan in Painting, before the Mughal advent, is completely ignored.

Perhaps in these brief lectures, only a general survey could be possible of architecture, painting, language and literature and one is asking too much from art history.

The distilled learning of Prof. Sherwani's readings into much source materials is something for which the new generation should be grateful. But we hope that Prof. Sherwani's students will go much further into each of the disciplines and marshal the evidence through the criss-cross of events, the contradictions of culture and the battle of ideas, which resulted in the true attempt at synthesis, as under Akbar, Ibrahim Adil Shah and Shah Jehan. And don't let anyone defend Aurangzeb's fanaticism and choking of the arts in the name of white-livered humanitarianism. That is false history.

India under the Kushans

The Art and Architecture of Aihole

**INDIA UNDER THE KUSHANS by
B. N. Puri**

**Published by Bharatiya Vidya
Bhavan, 1966—Rs. 20/-**

Prof. Puri's dedication to historical research has yielded up some of the most important writings around the 1st century B. C. to 3rd century A.D.

This became evident from India's contribution to the UNESCO Conference in Dushambe, Tajekistan in 1968.

The diggings in Central Asia have revealed certain new remnants of the reign of Kanishka and other Kushans, which Prof. Puri's background history illuminates. Fortunately, he knows the conflicts of history to be part of the social contradictions and interprets them, to a large extent, in that way. Also he is not anti-communist and has been willing to assimilate the findings of the Russian archaeologists, who have brought forth some of the most valuable evidence for the reconstruction of pre-Christian and post-Christian Central Asian history.

The Kushans were a west-Chinese tribe, who ventured out through Central Asia, to Afghanistan and later to India.

Under Kanishka the Empire stretched to Saurashtra in the south-west and Bihar in the south-east, with twin capitals at Peshawar and Mathura. The main cue for conquest had, of course been the land hunger. Obviously food was plentiful in

the river deltas of Northern India, with its comparatively thin population at that time.

The phenomena, however, which is the most fascinating part of the Kushan conquest is: how, in less than fifty years, the Barbarians, from near Sinkiang, were able to absorb the Gandhara culture, acquire the graces of Buddhism, and allow the dynasty to be transformed from militarism to Buddhism. It is likely that the influence of the poet Ashvagosha, either as adviser to Kanishka (which Prof. Puri doubts because of lack of evidence of any clear dates about Kanishka as well as Ashvagosha) or through his poems seems to have had something to do with the refining of the hardened conquerors. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for all those salbhanjikas, nymphs, fawns and lovely naked girls to appear in the sculptures of Mathura, in all their lush beauty, carved in exciting volumes, with naked pudenda, and decorative jewellery, costumes and hair styles.

The stabilisation of the monarchy in the Kushan Empire for more than a century, through effective organisation of trade routes, rendered possible a rich social life at least at the top. The self-sufficiency of agriculture, because the consuming population was small, combined with the flow of merchandise on the new safe routes opened up by the army, seem to have been important factors. Kanishka seems to have created an oligarchical social structure, somewhat humanised by the Buddha's teaching and acceptance of the remnants of Sunga rule.

Like his other contemporaries, Prof. Puri is unable to assert any exact dates about Kanishka, but he shares with the late Prof. Kosambi the aptitude for interpretation based on social realities. Also, he concentrates on sources of history before beginning to write his narratives. Thus he offers an example of those historians of India who simply rewrite what western scholarship has put forward in the last hundred years.

**THE ART AND ARCHITECTURE
OF AIHOLE by Dr. R. S. Gupta**

**Published by D. B. Taraporevala
Sons & Co.—Rs. 98/-**

Dr. Gupta has followed up his monograph on Ellora with this documentary survey of the great complex of Temples in Aihole, Patadakal and nearby monuments. The author clearly demarcates the architecture from the sculpture, which is perhaps an invidious distinction in temples of the period, when the sculpture, mostly bas-relief, was part of the architecture.

In this context, we would do well to follow the example of Dr. Stella Kramrisch, whose treatment of the 'wall' of Konarak suggested the kind of focus from which the reader may gain an integral idea of the growth of early mediaeval monuments. This is not to cavil at Dr. Gupta's industrious compilation, but only to indicate that, beyond the factual evidence about these constructions, and the images that grew out of them, there is room for stylistic analysis. Perhaps Dr. Ray could have written a longer introduction and given us the kind of analysis that he has already done in his brilliant lecture on Amravati.

As it is, this book remains an important scientific text, in which all the information about the Chalukyan monuments of Aihole is painstakingly summed up for students of Indian art and architecture.

The pioneer publishing house of Taraporevala does less than justice to itself by not getting a better designed dust jacket; the green rexine binding is inappropriate; the layout of the volume is in the conventional archaeological survey memoir style of the 19th century. Book production is today a highly developed art and there is no reason why the Indian publisher should lag behind the Japanese, the German and the Swiss in this regard.



**RAJPUT ARCHITECTURE by
G. S. Ghurye**

**Published by Popular Prakashan.
Rs. 48/-**

Dr. Ghurye is a dynamic scholar with an eclectic mind, who has adventured in many disciplines beyond the Professorial specialisms. His researches extend from caste, class and occupation to scheduled tribes, Indian Sadhus, Bharata Natya and its costume, Shakespeare on conscience and justice, to the sexual behaviour of the American females.

Rajput Architecture is the result of the impulse given by Coomaraswamy's *Rajput Painting*.

Dr. Ghurye seems to have mastered not only the chief monuments and buildings of Rajasthan, but has done comparative analysis of these constructions with the early mediaeval temples of Aihole, Patadakal, Khajuraho, Gwalior, Bhuvaneswar and the rest.

The comparative analysis helps the reader to understand the mixed influences which went to the building of the various structures of Rajasthan from the 7th to the 18th century, though one wishes that the author had concentrated on his main theme, almost chronologically, and brought in the references to other architecture in India in the context of his analysis.

Unfortunately, in spite of his own accurate perceptions, Dr. Ghurye has not lost the habit of the scholar in quoting extensively other authorities like Cunningham, Burgess, Cousens and the other pioneers. And yet the book was a necessary compilation, as much material has been made accessible to students from many scattered sources.

The illustrations do not show any of the beauty, the grace, or the magnificence, of the monuments.

The publishers seem to believe that an art book is the same kind of production as a book on Sociology. The photographs must have been vague and the layout expert, if there was one, seems to have no visual imagination. The rectangular windows in black on every art page, which enclose the titles of the temples, seem to give the impression of obituary notices. The lavish expenditure on the book, which meant it being priced at Rs. 48/-, would have been justified if a little more money had been spent on a good designer. Then the book could have been sold at Rs. 50/- per copy without the libraries protesting.

**MINIATURES OF THE MUSICAL
INSPIRATION by Ernst and Rose
Leonore Waldschmidt**

Published by Popular Prakashan.

This is one of the most conscientious books on Indian Miniature Paintings, compiled with German thoroughness, and produced according to the highest production values now available to art book publishers, almost everywhere in the world.

The theme is the Berlin *Pahari Ragmala*.

In regard to provenance and date, the authors give a fair exposition of the various points of view of Archer—Randhawa, Khandalavala—Motichandra and Barrett-Gray.

Of course, the poor outsiders can hardly do anything else, when the insiders seem to be at loggerheads with each other.

The most helpful part of the monograph is the sober exposition, which treats all the scholars on a par, and even resurrects the evidence of the much

neglected pioneer, Hermann Goetz, from obscurity into focus.

The peculiar adventure of Indian painters in supplying parallels of musical modes in paintings is a fascinating example of the courage shown by Indian craftsmen in the sensitive renderings of the echoes of one art into another.

Yehudi Menuhin has characterised the musical mode of a Raga as follows:

'What at first arises from the sounds of the humming tones, which are always forming the prelude of a composition, is the intimate chosen melodic line or Raga. Each tune of improvisation remains within this original frame, not a single passage or flourish exceeds this determined magnetic field of those first tones, and all the following music has to keep strictly to that skeleton of notes, which was chosen for a certain improvisation.'

This definition would have precluded parallel symbolism, if someone in the mediaeval period had not shown the courage to think of sound in images or colours in correspondence to a melody. No one knows who initiated this practice, or when it quite began. But the feudal mediaeval courts, which were patrons of various arts, sometimes combined a love of music with a fondness for painting. Ibrahim Adi Shah of Bijapur is a well-known example of this kind of patron. But there were many others. And once the convention of Raga Ragini pictures was established, different sets were made, with varying symbolisms, by painters of different areas.

In spite of the fixed conventions that the Todi Ragini is to be a woman with a veena in her hand, confronting a deer in a lush landscape, the interpretations of the heroine of Todi Ragini have naturally been good, bad or indifferent, in the hands of the various masters. The colours have also varied.

Decorative Designs and Craftsmanship of India

The comparative research in the relation of one set of Ragini pictures with another has been slow. Therefore, only a few masterpieces have been established and published by Shri O. C. Gangoly in two handsome volumes in 1934-35. Since then the pictorial qualities of the pictures have had less attention given to them than the documentation about the various sets.

One would wish that writers of the objectivity of Mr. & Mrs. Waldschmidt would address themselves to the task of bringing out other volumes on the important sets, so that students of painting can isolate the better compositions from the second and the third rate examples.

DECORATIVE DESIGNS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP OF INDIA by Enakshi Bhavnani

Published by D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co.—Rs. 65/-

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, who broke through the half-dead minds of the bureaucracy and revived the handicrafts of India during the last twenty years, writes in the Preface of this book:

"One may ask why the singling out of designs and the emphasis on it. The answer is that design is of basic importance in any human expression and material production, because it is the design that gives identity to an object. It is the outer projection of the inward urge of man. As man evolved so did his creations and the wealth of shapes, forms, motifs, kept moving like a never ending panorama. Whatever object men and women used in their daily life, in ceremonials, rituals, festivals and special celebrations, they endowed it with a particular



pattern which their imagination guided them to believe as appropriate and fitting for the purpose."

Under the historical conditions of contemporary India, when the craft tradition had nearly broken down, Kamaladevi's work is the most important contribution towards teaching the middle classes what the folk have still retained after two hundred years of disruption.

The record of the traditional designs, embodied in this book, and in the previous Art & Industry Publication of 1001 motifs, is the incidental result of the efforts of the All-India Handicrafts Board in restoring the old skills to themselves.

Neither Kamaladevi, however, nor any of her colleagues have brought into focus the conflict which has arisen, at many points, between the traditional design and the modern industrial design, of the third Machine revolution of the world. In so far as India has entered the atomic age at the same time as it has revived its decaying ancient forms, it shows that we have the co-existence of a purely agrarian culture with a sophisticated industrial culture.

There are very few self-conscious designers in our country. And the integration of the relevant old designs, with the new contemporary forms, has not been attempted beyond Pupul Jayakar, Shona Ray, Surjit Sahay and Ratna Fabri. Thus we get the unfelt sentimentalism

of the graphic design of the Konarak kiss, the Mughal Nawab's harem and Bharata Natyam dance poses, of the otherwise streamlined Boeing 707 of Air India. Our public is so weak-minded that members of Parliament protested when the Air India hostess' costume was sought to be changed from the elegant, decorative, but impractical, sari to the more pragmatic kurta-pyjama designed by a Frenchman. (Of course, the absence of respect for Indian designers always means that our smart alics among the executives will always employ a foreigner to teach them how to live and dress and have their being).

We hope that, during the next few years, discussions will begin on the difficult task of absorbing the interior consciousness of the rhythmic expression of the Indian metabolism at the same time as we assimilate some of the forms of the machine age.

Actually, such a synthesis may help to originate brilliant industrial design in our country, because our comparatively slow growth has not yet dehumanised us and has kept us potentially in the situation of having to invent everything new for living in the 21st century.



Lalit Kala (Ancient) No. 13

Hinduism, Buddhism and Zen

Himalayan Art

LALIT KALA (ANCIENT) NO. 13

Published by Lalit Kala Akademi,
New Delhi.

Lalit Kala (Ancient) which is the only specialist magazine on Archaeology and Art History published in our country sustains the high standards of research articles which have appeared in it for many years. The fact that the Editor cannot probably secure research articles of calibre easily, since the gradual passing away of the older generation of scholars or their retirement from active life, makes the Journal tardy with its schedule. The new young are difficult to find, since the Bageshwari Chair in Calcutta University is no longer active; the Banaras Chair has been made inactive through the disturbances in the University during recent years, and the members of the other seats of learning and research have not passed the Editor's test for scholarship. Mr. Khandalavala has, however, found a new band of writers like S. R. Balasubramaniam, V. C. Ohri, R. C. Agarwala and others who appear in this number.

One of the suggestions which we wish to make to Mr. Khandalavala is, whether he could include a longer Editorial by himself, summing up the research in Indian Art History of every year, which would give a more popular interpretation and criticism of the new points raised in the researches. That would make the Journal more accessible to the scholars.

HINDUISM, BUDDHISM AND ZEN by Nancy Wilson Ross

Published by Faber & Faber. Sh. 45/-

At one time books on oriental religions used to be confined to the untouchable shelves of Foyle's Oriental Bookshop, or the backroom of Messrs. Zwemmer's

elegant premises in Charing Cross Road, or to the specialists like Luzac & Co., Probasthain, and Kegan Paul, near the British Museum. Then came the American adolescent interest after World War II, in the deeper recesses of the Asiatic mind, as revealed in the art of Japan, India and China. The artists were able to see, beyond the principle of form, of modern western art, some of the stirrings of the inner life from which the variegated expressions of the phenomenal craftsmanship had become possible. Yoga, Nirvana and Zen became fashionable in New York, London and Paris. The writers, Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood, turned from science and general knowledge to the Oriental scriptures. The western crisis of technology-run-mad, which has now brought world civilisation near enough to dissolution, made the new generations of Beatniks, Beatles and Hippies turn to Mahesh Maharishi as well as the Manhattan and Mayfair Yogis, for the depth which they suspected to be absent from their background.

Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa once said: 'He who tries to give an idea of god is like the man who tries to give an idea of the city of Benares by means of a map or a picture.' Most contemporary books on Asian religions are like those maps of Benares.

The book under review escapes from the superficiality of such compositions, because the author relates her exposition of the three religions with the art which expresses these faiths. The underlayers of the sensibility from which the wealth of imagery arose are hinted at and direct experience of the cultures of Asia is invited, beyond tourism, in depth. Mrs. Ross is an ardent student who communicates her zest for the inner life in fluent language, though the tendency to give certificates to Asian cultures, from men like Oppenheimer and Toynbee is too patronising to be repeated, in spite of the fact that the Western Epicureans like Cyril Connolly needs Isherwood's conversion to Hinduism to justify his condescension to books on oriental art.

HIMALAYAN ART

by Madanjeet Singh

(Unesco Art Series) Macmillan
Price: Guineas £2.00

This is a monumental volume, in the making of which all the talents of Mr. Madanjeet Singh, have been completely fused. The most important trait in this young author's character is his *wanderlust*. And, as though he needed an art to keep a record of his wanderings, he has acquired remarkable skill as a photographer. And then there is the abounding curiosity in the service of which he has cultivated knowledge of art history. All these talents could not have been more usefully employed than in the compilation of this book on *Himalayan Art*.

Mr. Madanjeet Singh travelled across thousands of miles into the Himalayan ranges, across the difficult passes, upto fairly great heights, for a non-mountaineer; he penetrated into monasteries and temples and folk shrines; and he brought back thousands of photos, colour and monochrome, of manuscripts, wall paintings and sculptures.

The plates in the compilation have been reproduced with near-excellence by the publisher. The rich volume opens up many areas for further study by this pioneer and other followers of the 'holy trail'. The text has been patiently compiled from notes taken by Mr. Madanjeet Singh on the spot, and from scanty available researches in the hitherto relatively unexplored areas. Inevitably the essays remain tentative and suggestive, without becoming doctrinaire formulations.

In general, as one sees the transition in the art of the Himalayas, from the upper reaches of Ladakh, Lahaul, Spiti, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan towards the lower reaches of the Sivaliks, the transition seems to be from the impulses of the folk in the remote areas, confronting nature from felt experience, to the docile acceptance of the readymade iconography of the Shastras, whether

Fundamental Questions in Aesthetics

Art and Man

The Meaning of Art

Vedic, Aryan, Puranic or Buddhist. When the court arts of the Mauryans, (322-332 B. C.) the Kushans (50 B. C.-A. D. 210), the Guptas (A. D. 320-530), the later Guptas (A. D. 530-770), the Palas (A. D. 770-940), and the Pratiharas (A. D. 833-942), infiltrate slowly from the plains into the Terai, and beyond, upto the hills, these waves met not only the indigenous folk emanations but also penetrations from Mongolia, China and Central Asia.

It is not possible to generalise how the various tendencies were assimilated, why the forms matured in certain bizarre composition, and whether they succeeded in becoming, uniformly, art of the highest calibre. Much more investigation will be necessary, a tremendous amount of research and comparative religion and culture, will have to be endowed, and a co-operative process evolved, before discrimination of the variegated processes can take place.

The philosophical attitude will also have to be one of acceptance of all the co-existing forms and expressions and ideologies. And, especially, the humanness of the response of people will have to become a norm. The high and mighty Vedantist approach of transcendental egoism will have to admit that people also laugh, cry or smile, that there are 'demons inside' us of fear, hatred and greed, in us and that the Kamaloka attitudes of the Tantra are based on genuine folk insights, which break through systems of thought, with freshness of feeling.

If art expression is the expiation by the sensitive outsider of his own broodings about the environment, then the tension, in a particular form is certainly more symptomatic of human awareness than the objective effort at a fake classical order.

It is likely that if we adopt this humanist view towards expression, we can find the 'quick' in the remotest villages, where man has sheltered on the highest mountains, where he dared, and among

the loveliest valleys where he has cleared the vegetation to arrange a small civilised order.

Can an Institute of Himalayan Art be established somewhere in the Himalayas to make for understanding of the cultures of the mixed population without suspicions about their political *bonafides*?

Mr. Madanjeet Singh's book opens many avenues for the future.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS IN AESTHETICS

by P. C. Chatterji.

Published by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla.

ART AND MAN

by B. S. Mardhekar.

Published by Popular Prakashan.

THE MEANING OF ART

by Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Published by Lalit Kala Akademi.

Mr. P. C. Chatterji has produced one of the first genuinely contemporary works on aesthetic theory that has so far appeared in our country.

It is a pity he did not take in Indian Aesthetic theories of the past, demonstrate their relevance, or irrelevance, and go on to modern Western approaches before coming to his contemporary formulations. As he confines himself mainly to European aestheticians, the research might have been done in Cambridge rather than in the Institute of Advanced Study, Simla.

All the same, Mr. Chatterji's exposition of *Fundamental Questions in Aesthetics* is important for Professors of art theory and artists in India as well as for the literateurs.

In recent years, another Indian writer, the late B. S. Mardhekar, wrote some essays which have appeared in the

book *Art and Man* in translation from the Marathi original *Saundrya ani Sahitya*. Although the latter book is written in an Indian language, it too is based mainly on the hypothesis put by Clive Bell, and other British writers.

Mardhekar seems to accept the pure sensation basis of Clive Bell and inevitably reduces his aesthetic to 'significant form,' as it was understood in Bloomsbury.

Mr. Chatterji is a little more comprehensive, in so far as he analyses the solipsist theory of seeing the art object, the Croce-Collingwood theory, and the Alexander-Langer theory. The net result of his criticism of these theories is a final acceptance of many motivations in judging a work of art. For instance, apart from compactness in a creative work, such as the classicists insist upon, he accepts the 'romantic frills' as possible, does not reject poetry as rhetorical sound beyond meaning, as in Dylan Thomas and may even accept the 'ugly' if he is compelled to argue.

The more comprehensive of the three books listed above, though it is a jumble of all his thinking on aesthetic, is by Rabindra Nath Tagore, the *Meaning of Art*. In this short essay, the old traditionalist poet breaks out of the accepted idea of harmony, and coherence, to the admission of the experimental works. The essay seems to belong to the period when the poet was already beginning his second childhood when free drawings and paintings of all kinds of surrealist forms of the inner world broke through his kinetic gestures. The release of these gestures compelled him to put down the following words, which are likely to be of the utmost significance to the future thinkers and practitioners of aesthetic activity in India: 'When in the name of Indian Art we cultivate, with deliberate aggressiveness, a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our souls under idiosyncracies unearthed from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the ever changing play of life.'



The Mind and Work of Paul Klee

Paul Klee

THE MIND AND WORK OF PAUL KLEE, by Werner Haftmann, Sh. 16/-

PAUL KLEE, Pedagogical Sketch Book, Sh. 9/-

Published by Faber & Faber

Among the makers of modern art, Paul Klee will come to be reckoned as a giant, though he was a comparatively small man in physical height. The reason for this is that he was one of those enlightened men of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who was bold

enough to confront himself, and his time, with a mental courage not given to many painters. Most artists seem to rely on their skill and explain away their lack of interest in other disciplines by saying that they are only interested in their own medium.

Paul Klee was able, in spite of his modesty, to ask himself fundamental questions about the creative process. The French poet and critic, Paul Valéry, had indeed been addressing himself to similar questions when he wrote his famous essay on Leonardo da Vinci. Klee has not the range of Valéry. But he is much more specific and goes deeper into his psyche in discovering the sources of artwork.

The **Pedagogical Sketch Book** contains some pen drawings, which Klee used for theoretical instruction at the Bauhaus in Weimer, of which Gropius became the head in 1919.

No European artist except Leonardo, had gone so deeply into the intricate world of creativeness as did Paul Klee.

There are four sections in this book entitled: 1. Proportionate Line and Structure, 2. Dimension and Balance, 3. Gravitational Curve, 4. Kinetic and Chromatic energy. These titles can only indicate the actual dynamics of Klee's insights. The drawings also give only a parallel indication of how the rhythmic life works. Unlike those who deduce graphic representation from broad principles of absolute beauty and absolute colour harmonies, Paul Klee worked from the principle of induction, that is to say, inducing one line from another. He called it 'exactitude winged by intuition'.

Klee begins with the linear dynamics as they grow from the aesthetic dot in



the phenomenal world, then goes from observation to intuition, where different laws and new symbols hold sway, signifying freer movement and more dynamic positions; then he enters the field of energy which is the unending self-transformation of line and colour, reaching a reverberation of the finite on the infinite.

This study of psychophysical phenomena is always on parallel lines with some of the *Silpa Shastras* of the Hindus, interpreted by Miss Alice Boner in her *Principles of Hindu Sculpture*. The formulations of Klee also recall some of the findings of Kandinsky in his book *The Spiritual in Art*.

The critical biography by Werner Hoffman is a penetrating interpretation of the total work of Klee. This is a more popular treatise than that of Carola Giedion Welcker, and may be read in conjunction with the work of Klee by Will Grohmann. Those who do not understand modern art, but have the patience to learn, will be fascinated by the wealth of material in both these volumes. Our young artists must brood over the world of faculty and experience in Klee's sketch book and not repeat the word 'form' *ad nauseam*.



ESTHETICA 67

Published by New Era School.

The sustained effort of the New Era School for many years, in allowing children to express themselves, supplies a model for all schools.

The Editor Shri Danesh Shah has put down some how-to-do-it items on the art programme for schools which we quote below.

We quote these because the experience behind the suggestions seems to have given these directives practical value.

ART PROGRAMMES REFLECTIONS ON ART EDUCATION

1. The basic purposes of Art Education are to enable children to see clearly, feel deeply, and to express without restraints with creative imagination.
2. Art Education functions not only as a subject area that provides aesthetic experiences for children but also as a normal activity which is concerned with every visual expression.

A continuity of art experiences facilitates development of personality.

3. Subject—matter in Art is concerned with the day-to-day experience of children.
4. The value of art activities is usually evaluated by the degree of excitement, pleasure, absorption and the joy of creating that the child experiences.
5. Every child has varied potentialities. The personal expression of each child has worth because it represents the best of which the child is capable.

Original work of a child's art is in direct proportion to the degree in which the work is really his own.

The urge to express is fundamental. Creative expressions result from experiences that have been rich and meaningful.

THE TEACHER'S IMPORTANT ROLE

- a The teacher is responsible for providing free atmosphere and facilities that have rewarding values for children in both personal satisfaction and expressions.
- b One of the greatest challenges to helping teachers is the children in their art experience. A delicate balance must be maintained between over-enthusiasm to interfere and allowing children to develop their own abilities and to express their own ideas.
 - * a class-room environment that is stimulating and meaningful;
 - * a functional and efficient class-room organization;
 - * a variety of equipment and materials organized for effective distribution;
 - * pupil participation in planning;
 - * appreciation and encouragement for the child doing creative work.

ART APPROACH

- I. Observing
Exploring
Discovering
- II. Manipulating
Selecting
Comparing
Experimenting
Organizing
Constructing
Designing
Creating
- III. Sharing
Enjoying
Evaluating
Appreciating

ART PROGRAMME FOR K.G. TO STD. I

Age 3 to 6 years

ART MATERIALS AND MEDIA

Painting: Tempera colours, starch colour, powder colour, crayon colours—dry and oil pastels; Papers—big size newspapers, brown papers and tinted papers, brush, fold, fingers, paintings, dish, piece of cloth, cotton and feather, etc.

Printing: Bottle tops, paper clips, wooden blocks, vegetables, sticks, pads, sponge, string and any texture paints. Tempera colours, newspapers, cyclostyle papers, drawing papers, tinted papers, etc., a flat tray with gunny-bag pieces and all the different colours—press sponge or stamp pad with colour.

Collage: Collage is a design created by arranging material of various colours, textiles or dimensions on a surface. It is an expression that is based on a natural desire to see, to touch and to feel. Material—a cardboard, string yarn, thread, coloured paper, cloth gift paper, tissue paper, metallic paper, seeds, grass, sand, dry leaves, tooth-picks, buttons, etc., scissors, liquid starch, gummed tape and staples.

**SADANGA SERIES BY VAKILS ON
MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY
ART**

1. Sabavala
2. Hussain

The title that the publisher has given to the series almost implies by the use of the word *Vakils* that they are doing justice to Contemporary Indian Art. As it is, we do not know why these two painters were chosen, or for the matter of that why the three previous ones, Raza, Gade and Padamsee were chosen. Vakils seem to be putting a partisan view forward.

The choice of the heroes of contemporary painting in the series seems either to stem from the Editor's dictatorship in art, or from the publisher's purely pragmatic interest. Both owe some explanation of the disorder in their minds.

The get-up, the presentation and the text are certainly far finer than those of any art publishing in the country. Therefore, we hope that many more new painters will receive recognition by inclusion in this series.

There is no room here for analysis of the texts of Mr. S. V. Vasudeo on Sabavala, and Miss Geeta Kapur on Hussain. Both tend to make their heroes to be paragons of virtue, or rather as the acme of all splendour in paint.

In the case of Hussain, Miss Kapur certainly suggests some doubts about the splendours, but the overall effect is one of unadulterated praise.

The failure of the critics in India to provide estimates of the real advancement of the contemporary artists may be due to the fact that, in our time, the artist presumes to be his own critic. He is unwilling to accept any writer, knowing

or unknowing, to be aware of the new miracles of contemporary art. Perhaps it is the reviewers who have been the cause of this adverse judgement against the critics. The reviewer tends to assess twenty paintings in eleven to fourteen lines, thereby making arbitrary generalisations in one or two lines, in praise or blame of the total work of the artist. Thus coterie get established. Each person of the coterie is made into a great master after one or two man shows, if the reviewer is friendly with a particular embassy or private patron, or political group. And what the factions cannot do is achieved by the commercial galleries, who must boost and sell incomprehensible art, to a backward public, still ingrained in traditionalism in 19th century portraiture, still life and landscape.

The confusion can only be cleared by more discussion, more publication, and more exposure of the new young to the works of their contemporaries.

—R. S.

ART AND INDUSTRY

Edited by S. N. Guha Ray. Published by the Indian Institute of Art and Industry.

This magazine has become thinner as the years go by. All the same, it carries some significant material always and we wish that the foundation behind the Indian Institute of Art and Industry could make it comprehensive.

The most important article, for which alone this number is worth keeping, is on *Ajanta Painting—its technique and execution*. This essay written by one who has spent five years copying the cave paintings for the Archaeological Survey is one of the most painstaking studies of the way in which the underlayers were prepared on uneven surfaces for the carrying out of the wall paintings. This study of the materials is likely to yield new ground for interpretation of the quality of paintings.

Shri Hanoi suggests that the painters imitated the style of drawing of sculpture. He finds the display of light and shade in both techniques similar. In the folds of drapery also he suggests like techniques. He ventures on a bold suggestion that the painting of the Buddha in cave No. X resemble the Gandhara School of Sculpture in many respects.

Another important observation is that each painting is like a short drama. Also he suggests, the awareness by the Ajanta painters of space relations as between pillars and walls. To be sure, as we find a tall person or a pillar a hindrance in our viewing of a theatrical performance, so did the Ajanta painters find the pillars distracting—thus they did not paint those pillars which would have taken away the drama of the walls.

The reviews of exhibitions by contemporaries are most inadequate and give no idea of the work being done by the younger painters in eastern India.

—N. G.

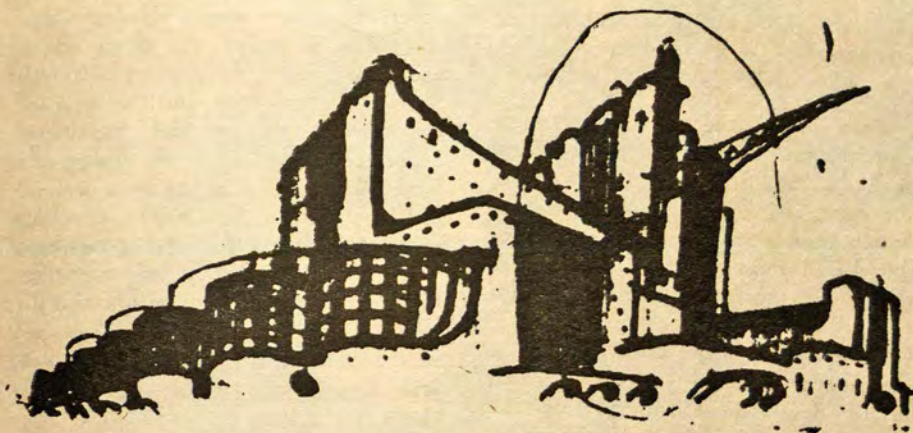
THE PENROSE ANNUAL (62) 1969.

The international review of the Graphic Arts edited by Herbert Spencer.

No review we could give to this marvellous compilation can better the blurb provided by the editors of the 1969 issue of the Penrose Annual. We reproduce the words of the publisher here and hope that the rest will go to all the printers, designers, book magazine and publishers of India, very few of whom have yet thought of giving any reverence to the image and word, as they are enshrined in the West in the midst of the third industrial revolution. May the words that follow take this annual to every library of India. And perhaps the Hindiwallahs, the Tamilians and the Gujaratis will ask the publisher's

Letters of an Architect

The Indian Architect



permission to translate and publish any of the material they like from this source book of design.

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This was the candid greeting from the proprietors (at that time A. W. Pensrose & Co. Ltd. to the readers of Volume I, published in 1895.)

LETTERS OF AN ARCHITECT

By Eric Mendelsohn

Published by Abelard Schuman.
London. Sh. 45/-

One of the most brilliant architects and designers, Mr. Eric Mendelsohn, who worked in Europe, America and Palestine, was throughout his life obsessively concerned with the revolution in architecture, which the new materials and the accumulated knowledge of five hundred years has rendered inevitable in the art of building. Famous for his Einstein Tower, in Potsdam 1920, he was forced to leave Germany by the Nazis. Along with Le Corbusier and Gropius, he saw the coming explosion of mind bursting from one age to the other. In 1910 he wrote: ‘I believe a new cultural epoch is dawning, based directly on the conceptions of antiquity leaving behind the musing and perversities of an effeminacy, degenerate in mind and sentiment.’

His letters are full of intimate criticism of many of the new buildings of our age, written by a man of vision as well as a great craftsman. The essence of his views is reflected in the prose poem entitled: ‘Why this Architecture?’

—C.C.

THE INDIAN ARCHITECT

This journal has entered the eleventh year of its publication. It is doing useful work in a field of discussion where there is little or no activity.

The contents generally take the form of illustrated articles on buildings, review, technology of architecture and short editorials, with a punch derived from the kind of writing which Patwant Singh used to do in Design Magazine.

Although it aims to provide some material to the town planner, there is little on this subject when the whole of India needs attention from the wider view of the reconstruction, or replacement, of our townships, by new patterns of elastic development, which may take into consideration the four norms of architecture of Le Corbusier—living, working, recreation and getting together. The Editor probably knows of the pioneer work done in this matter by Sir Patrick Geddes. It may be useful to follow up the same pattern of research for old townships, in order to have enough material on the social life, the economic facts, and physical and spiritual needs of the people, to revolutionise the debris of feudalism into contemporary habitations.

—M.R.A.

Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts

New Documents of Indian Painting

CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE IN LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

by Kapila Vatsyayan, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi.

This is without doubt the most extensive and authoritative treatise on the subject with which it deals. There has been a great revival in the last few decades of interest in Indian dancing and its exposition. But for the fullest appreciation of the dance in India it is necessary to have some knowledge of its background and its role in the cultural development of our country. How closely it is related in spirit to sculpture, painting and music can be gathered from the *Vishnudharmattara Purana*.

The treatise under review is a careful and scholarly work, albeit very readable, being written in simple English which avoids all highbrow jargon, which is so often the despair of those seeking to understand the principles of aesthetics in Indian art. The book is systematically planned and each chapter deals with a particular aspect, which is fully explained, so that the reader, even if not interested in the technical information supplied, can obtain a complete idea of the co-relation between the dance and the other arts as well as its treatment in various literary works.

Indian Aesthetics is not exactly an easy subject to comprehend, but the author, we feel, has succeeded admirably in simplifying various concepts of writers such as Bharata and Abhinavagupta and in explaining the variety of terms used with precision. This exposition is followed by a long chapter on the theory and technique of classical Indian dance, with tables of technical details appended at the end of each section, so that they do not disturb the flow of language. Here all the important texts are naturally resorted to and meanings explained, in relation to the technique of the two well-known divisions of art namely *Nritta* and *Abhinaya*. The tables in this chapter are essentially for the specialist, but educated dansuees would profit greatly by studying them. Here is the basis of

the art, painstakingly assembled, no matter what be the techniques which they learn today in actual practice.

Then follow the most entertaining chapters in the book, which deal with dancing in relation to literature, sculpture and music. A total of one hundred and fiftyfour photos, well reproduced and most intelligently selected, add greatly to the understanding not only of dance in relation to sculpture, but also of the dance itself as it must have been practised at various stages of its development, interpreting the ancient texts and no doubt also improvising from time to time. The amount of material gathered in these chapters indicates many years of hard work, a keen sense for all that is most relevant, and an ability to systematise such a mass of information from literary works, codes, commentaries and lexicons, from the time of Panini and Kautilya including even the Buddhist and Jain literature where it refers to the subject at hand. Many of the references make quite delightful reading such as the one to the parrot, Vaisampayana, learned in this lore! That gestures form an artificial code, as so often believed, is not entirely true and we find for instance that Vasantasena in the *Mrichhakatika* enacts the taking of her anklets and the groping with her hands for the wall and door of Charudatta's house. The wealth of material, which covers a long period of time, unfolding a lively picture of dance, music and drama as it actually existed centuries ago and indicating the mental attitude of connoisseurs and ordinary folk to these arts is of absorbing interest. But it is more than that. Inevitably such material is related to the entire cultural background of the age to which it pertains and hence its value is much enhanced as a study in Indian culture, though naturally with its emphasis on dance and drama. In the chapter on sculpture and dancing the author rightly seeks to relate certain aspects of plastic art to the theory and practice of the dance. This is exemplified at the great temple of Tanjore, the Chidambaram shrine and the Sarangapani temple on Kumbakonam. But the author is, according to us, quite justified in

observing that some scholars have attempted to analyse the dance scenes and dance poses in sculpture through Bharata's terminology, but the approach has obvious dangers and limitations. Sculpture pertaining to the dance at a large number of sites has been analysed and the author has many interesting suggestions to make and comparison with poses described in early literature. We believe this is the first time that the subject has been handled so fully and so completely. Kapila Vatsyayan's book will remain a standard work on its theme for a long time to come.

Karl Khandalavala

NEW DOCUMENTS OF INDIAN PAINTING: A REAPPRAISAL

By Karl Khandalavala & Moti Chandra

Published by Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay 1, India.

'The New Documents of Indian Painting' is a reappraisal of the materials which are little known or even if they are known their value and place in history of Indian Painting is freshly appraised. A phase of Indian art preceding the Mughal art is very little known. The authors have attempted to illustrate as many of these documents. They have discussed the different viewpoints and stated their own. Their acceptance or otherwise is left to the art critics.

All Book Reviews are by MARG except where indicated.



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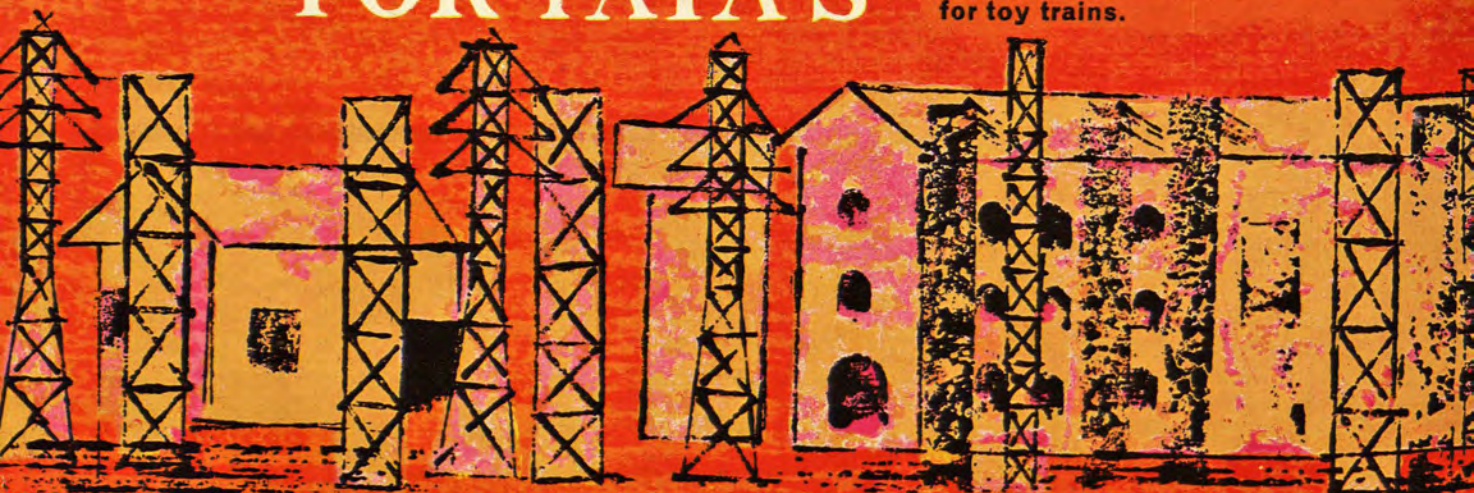
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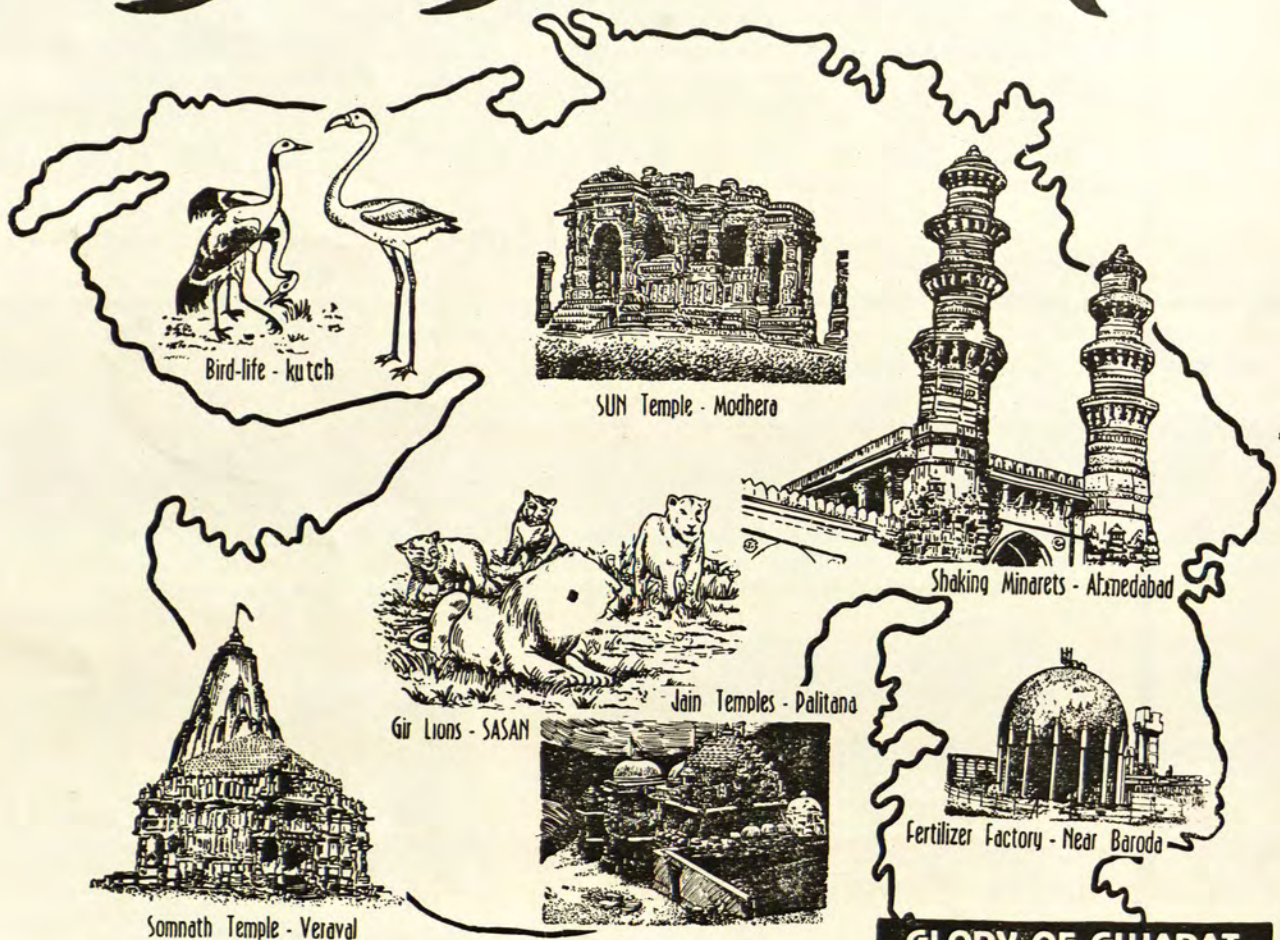
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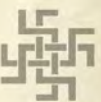
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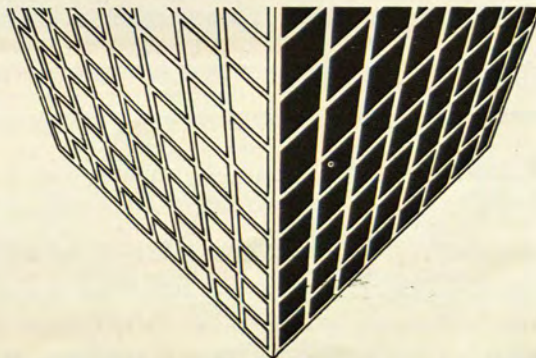


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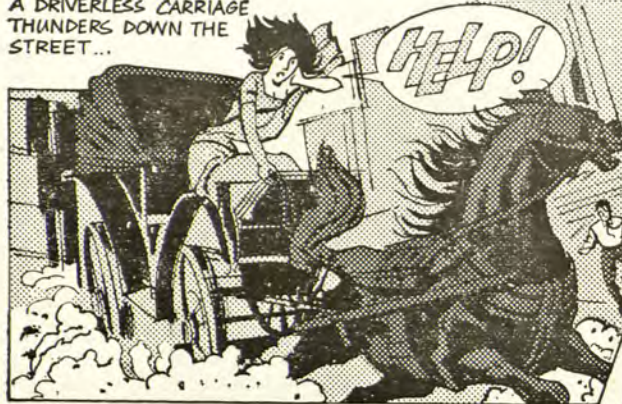


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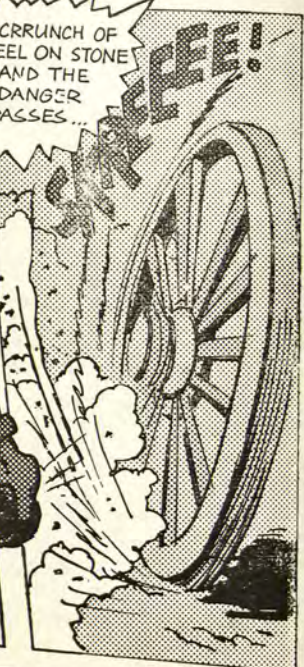
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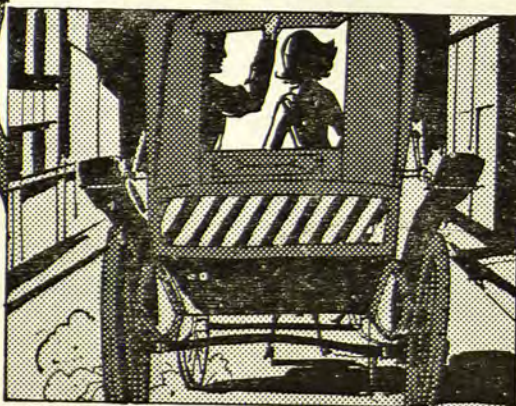


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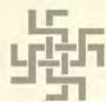
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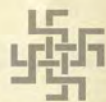
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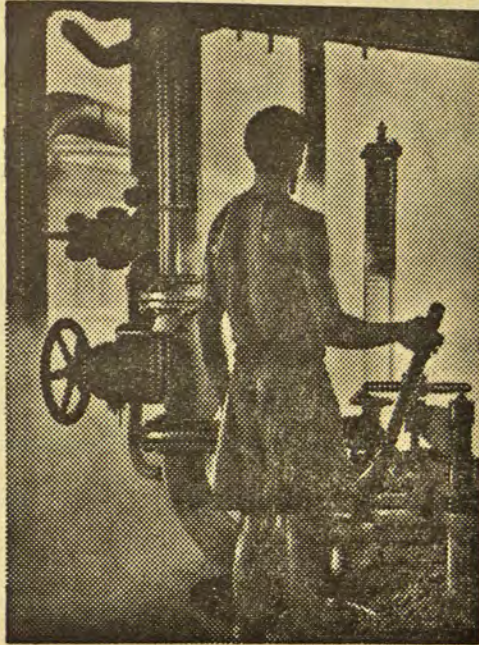
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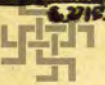
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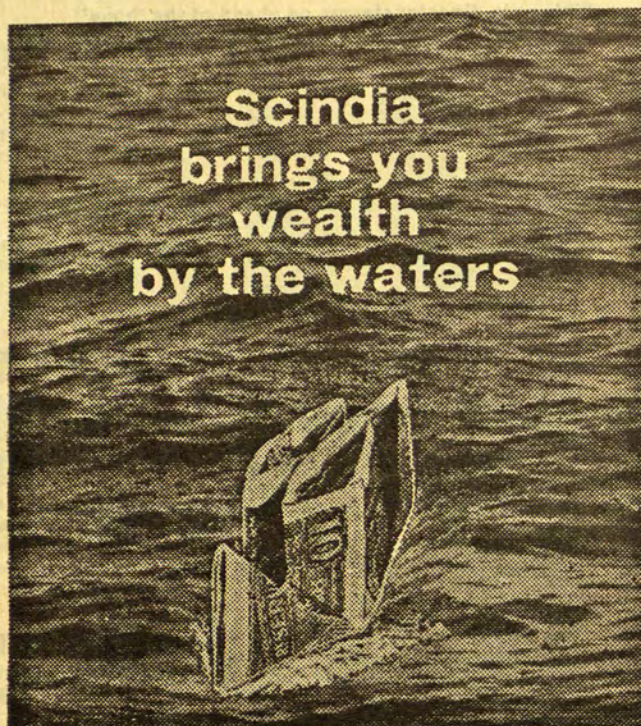
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Svachchhanda-Bhairavi Bronze Image from Kangra

The beautiful bronze image, illustrated here, comes from Kangra, Panjab. It is at present in the possession of Shri P. D. Kapoor, an antique-dealer of Delhi, according to whom it is a recent find. It has a five-line inscription at its base, in Sarada characters of about the 12th century A.D. The inscription is partly preserved and is still under study. It begins with the mention of the year 53 which, in common with similar inscriptions found in that part, refers itself to the Laukika era. From the circumstance that hundreds are usually omitted in this reckoning, it is difficult to determine the exact date as also its equivalent in the Christian era. Further on in the inscription, the name of a ruling chief is mentioned. The name, according to the tentative reading, appears to be *Naranayaka*, yet to be identified. The inscription, when completely deciphered and properly interpreted, is bound to shed considerable light on the problems besetting the explanation of the image the like of which is seldom met with. By reason of this extraordinary character of the piece, it is published here without waiting for the full decipherment of its inscription, so that those familiar with and expert in Hindu iconography may be able not only to appreciate it, but some of them may also be in a position to bring out the true significance of such images.

The main deity, female, crowned and heavily ornamented, seated on and supported by a four-handed male figure, has five faces and ten arms. Four of the faces are in the cardinal directions and the fifth one is on the top. Fourth of the five right hands is in the *abhaya-mudra*, while the corresponding left hand is in the *varada-mudra*. The remaining eight hands, beginning from the top right hand, respectively hold the following eight emblems: *khadga* (sword), *padma* (lotus), *trisula* (trident) or *chakra* (discus) with a *trisula* inside it, *kapala* (skull), *ankusa* (goad), *pasa* (noose), *pustaka* (book), and *amritaghata* (jar of ambrosia). The goddess is seated in *paryankasana* or *sukhasana*, with the right leg folded double and the left one hanging down. The four-handed god, serving as *vahana* of the goddess, is shown in an attitude of adoration, with the front two hands folded worshipfully, the back right hand lending support to the knee of the folded right leg of the goddess and the back left hand serving as the foot-stool for the foot of the hanging-down left leg of the goddess. The face of the *vahana* god is turned to the proper left as if trying to look upward at the face of the goddess respectfully. He also wears a crown and ornaments on the upper half of his body.

Below, to the right of the goddess is Ganesa and to her left is Siva, both in the dancing posture. Immediately below the male figure are two small seated figures in attendance and below the dancing Siva figure is another small figure which presumably represents the donor. The main figure is enclosed within a flamed trefoil-shaped aureole. The whole composition is well balanced, graceful and exquisite with the ends of the scarf and the lower garment of the goddess flying out as streamers. The swelling

breasts and entranced eyes lend an air of sublimity and tranquillity, the gorgeous garlands that of freshness and piety. The skilful rendering of each little detail redounds to the credit of the artist who fashioned this masterpiece of a bronze.

As to the identity of the main figure, the available literature was not of any help. I consulted Pandit Sarvanand Shastri of the National Museum, New Delhi, who himself besides being a good Sanskrit scholar, belongs to Kashmir and is a fervent devotee of Sakti or Parvati. I need hardly mention that the Himalayan mountains being sacred to Lord Siva and mythologically the Mt. Himalaya being the father of Parvati, Lord Siva's consort, the worship of Siva and Parvati is very popular in those regions and that one may reasonably expect to find there all the different forms of the two deities, mentioned in the *Puranas* and *Agamas*, especially in those belonging to the Kashmir Saivism. The provenance of the image under discussion is, as already stated, a place in the Northern Himalayas, namely Kangra, famous for Saiva temples in and around it. Pandit Sarvanand Shastri was also first puzzled as to the identity of the image discussed here, but later came with reference from certain *stotras*, that seem to tally.

First of all, he drew my attention to the *Anandalahari* of Sankara wherein in verse 8 we have the description of Sakti seated on Parama-Siva in *paryankasana*:

sivakare manche paramasiva-paryankanilayam.

From this we may identify the male four-handed figure of our piece with Siva or Parama-Siva (the supreme God Siva) serving as *vahana* to the main female deity. As to the identity of this female deity, Pandit Shastri gave me a description of a god named Svachchhanda-Bhairava, which also says that the same description applies to his female counterpart, otherwise known as Aghora Sakti.

The description given of this Bhairava or rather Svachchhanda-Bhairava, which is a very elaborate one, says *inter alia*:

"Success comes quickly to the person who concentrates and meditates on the god *Svachchhanda-Bhairava*, the grantor of all desired objects, having five faces,, decorated with a *hara* (flower garland) and *kapala-mala* (garland of skulls), holding in hands, a sword, a book, a noose, a goad, a lotus, the Pinaka bow, showing one hand in *varada* (boon-granting) attitude and another in *abhaya* (re-assuring) attitude, holding in another hand an *amrita-kalasa* (jar of ambrosia), a discus, and a trident,".

"Whatever form is of Bhairava is also of the excellent Aghora Sakti described by me previously."

Such details in the above description as the five faces and the emblems in hand do correspond to those found in the image under discussion, though it cannot be said that the description given above exactly tallies. In the absence of any more precise identification, I am inclined to identify our image with the Svachchhanda-Bhairavi aspect of the goddess Sakti.

—B. CH. CHHABRA

(Post script: The image has since been acquired by the National Museum, New Delhi.)

M A R G

A Magazine of the Arts

A Tata Enterprise

VOLUME XXIII

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NUMBER 2

EDITORIAL

HIMACHAL HERITAGE

by Mulk Raj Anand

I. ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

- 1 Masrur—by P. N. Mago
- 2 Baijnath—by Marg
- 3 Bajaura "
- 4 Brahmaur "
- 5 Nirth "
- 6 Kushala "
- 7 Chamba "

II. WALL PAINTINGS

by Marg

III. WOOD CARVING

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IV. ARTS AND CRAFTS

by Jasleen Dhamija

- 1 Metalware
- 2 Wool Weaving
- 3 Embroidery
- 4 Jewellery
- 5 Pottery—by P. N. Mago

Cover: Svachchhanda-Bhairavi bronze image from Kangra. (Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.)

MARG wishes to acknowledge its debt to the Himachal Pradesh Government or collaboration in making this display of the Heritage possible. Special gratitude is offered to Mrs. Jasleen Dhamija, Mr. P. N. Mago, Mr. Mittu and Dr. Sood for supplying material.

Photographs have been supplied by Mr. Ram Dhamija, Mrs. Jasleen Dhamija, Mr. P. N. Mago and Miss D. H. Sahiar.

Throughout our tour of the Himachal Pradesh from Chamba across the Kangra Valley to Simla and the Hindustan-Tibet Road, we found genuine love for the creative works of the past and the demand from Museums in each District.

We hope that the present compilation will help the coming to be of a Central Museum in Simla, and new buildings for existing Museums in Chamba and Mandi as well as Museums in Kot Kangra, Nahan and Rampur Bushair.

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HIMACHAL

There is no doubt that the Himalayan region always offered the safest retreat for the peoples from the northern plains, whenever they were defeated, or pressed hard by the invaders, from before history to the eras downwards till the 19th century. The surviving stocks show many mixtures of ethnic strains of the most varied character.

The faiths of the people have also varied from the magical practices of the primitives to the imported doctrines of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

There is every likelihood that some early hymns of the Vedas were sung among the foothills of the contemporary East Punjab and left their impress on the minds of successive generations of people. Nature, in its more terrible aspects, always brought forth poems of appeasement. The sun rising over the giant mountains must have presented to early man the only vitalising force against the winter colds; so Surya continued to appear as a symbol of energy in his various incarnations throughout known time. The dawns have been some of the loveliest apparitions from the first mornings of the world till this day; so Usha has been worshipped by the remote peoples as a felt presence. The violent storms that raged in the Himalayas made first Rudra, and then his incarnation Shiva, the saviour of all the frightened ones. The latent potencies of woman, first worshipped as a mother goddess, assumed various guises through the ages, reappearing dominantly as Chandi, the terrible goddess, sword in hand, who was able to destroy all the enemies of man with the weapons in her various hands.

During the periods of formal dynastic rule, in different parts of the hills and valleys, the classical formulas of Hinduism were asserted. The chieftain himself tended to be the God-King, describing himself as a descendant of the Sun, of whom Rama was an avatar, or in direct lineage from the Pandavas of Mahabharata fame, or of Rajput heroes, defenders of India.

The common formula of the Brahmins that the One became Many and the Many want to become One, confirmed the anthropomorphic belief that everything is part of everything else. Thus the transformation of nature into gods, demons and heroes, went on as an instinctive doctrine of survival.

The paltry agrarian-craft-hand-tool economy, did not yield enough surplus for building extensive superstructures for culture. But whenever a Raja annexed smaller principalities and looted the vanquished territories, he tended to assume the title of Maharaja and exercised his vanity by the elaboration of temples, the encouragement of fine weaves, the building of golden thrones, and silver utensils, fine palaces with paintings on the walls, and precious jewellery to please his many wives.

The feudal societies of two thousand years thus brought about a small provincial court culture, generally an imitation of the Imperial cultures of the central capital, whether this was Pataliputra, Ujjain, Prayag, Delhi or Lahore.

HERITAGE

Occasionally, the artisans from the great court were patronised when the central authorities were in difficulties. And, then, the culture complex was intensified by the genius of the visiting master craftsmen. Otherwise, the forms current in the big towns were copied in a routine manner by the feudatory princes, chieftains and landlords.

Throughout, however, the folk sustained themselves on their own animistic hunches, by expressing vitalities as functions of the ordinary life. The peasant had to build his own hut under the advice of the village craftsmen and he had to use local materials, quarried by himself. He had to mix his own colours from stones and vegetables. He had to weave his own cloth. He had to elaborate his own tools. And thus he remained creative, from the very compulsion of having to fulfil certain daily tasks.

The compulsive force behind his elaborations in house building, wood carving, painting on walls, weaving of fabrics, casting of metal, the making of terracotta pots and images, supplied a continuous source of inventive ability of the folk to the hierarchy on the top, when they needed sustenance.

The culture of the Himachal region, therefore, is the mixed product of the organic folk sensibility and the sophisticated genius of the master-craftsmen from the royal courts. The complexes are weighed by the people's instinctive primitive vitalities, though, occasionally, what is called the classical style appears.

If we study the arts and crafts in their surviving forms today, it is not because of our sentimental regard for the 'arty crafty' mentality of the present-day lower middle classes seeking vitality from folk culture, but because we wish to inherit the impulses, inspirations and uncanny intensities of the people's genius in creative construction, in instinctive realisation of images, and in the elaboration of myriads of vital forms, which are, in their own right, the equal of similar works by the sophisticated artists of our own atomic age, in the great centres of world culture. In this sense, we would like to lift some of these forms from their local background to the pool of perennial art forms of the world.

It is likely that the third industrial revolution, in which Himachal Pradesh, as part of the New India will enter, might inhibit the skills which have produced the beauties of traditional handicrafts. But there is enough quick in the hands. And a slowly emerging sense of the contemporary world needs to form the basis of industrial design. From this point of view, the future of the workmanship becomes more important than the adumbrations of the past.

The tendency of education in our country has been to produce Babus or Masterjis or Afsars. But the time has come, as Gandhi and Zakir Hussain insisted, to avoid mental death of the child mind through atrophy of his sensibility, by giving learning by doing to release the natural exuberance for the making of things. Colours, forms, sensations sweep through the souls of the naive folk. The vertiginous procession can be disciplined through new technical innovations, until the conventional forms can yield to a new all-embracing language of new forms.

ARCHITECTURE

There have been differences of opinion on the basis of classification of mediaeval Indian architecture.

One of the first historians of architecture of our country, Henry Fergusson, was for a sectarian nomenclature. But if we look at the surviving monuments, they have borrowed so much from each other in various periods that they cannot be classified as Buddhist, Jain or Brahmanical styles. Ananda Coomaraswamy rightly insisted that they can be called the Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical buildings in the Indian style of a particular period and not the architectural forms of these denominational religions. Equally, he criticised the acceptance, by Havell and Diez, of the Manasara categories of the Hindu, Vishnu and Shiva temples.

If we seek to build up definitions in terms of a 'time-bound' art history, then the development and growth of the Indian temple, its variations, adaptations and elaborations, must be studied from period to period, specially in terms of the provincial styles as also in relation to the secular constructions.

Therefore, in the context of the historical process, we must accept Coomaraswamy's dictum about *geographical classifications as part of the historical development*.

According to the shilpashastras and Fergusson, the three geographical divisions are as indicated below:

	A	B
Northern (mainly north of the Vindhyas)	Nagara	Indo-Aryan or Aryavarta
Central (Western India, Deccan & Masrur)	Vesara	Chalukyan
Southern (Madras Presidency & Northern Ceylon)	Dravida	Dravidian

The dominant characteristic of these three styles are as follows:

1. The Northern temples generally have a curvilinear Sikhara;
2. The Central style seems to combine the peculiarities of both the northern and southern styles;
3. The Southern temples have a terraced pyramidal tower, of which the dome part is called Sikhara.

Even a strictly historical treatment in a consecutive order is difficult, because the many temples of each of these styles, which survive in ruins, or in repairs, were built more or less in the same or near period.

The temples of Masrur, Baijnath, Bajaura belong to the 8th, 9th, 10th centuries, the Nagara monolithic group, except that Masran combines features of the Northern and the Southern styles to some extent. So does the Laxmi Narayan temple in Chamba.

The smaller temples in Brahmaur and Chattrahi with images of Mahishmardhani, Sakti, Ganesha, Narasimha and Nandi, are different, because of the absence of the Sikhara and the introduction of Chhatris and tiled roofs, as well as square plinths, which relate them to domestic architecture.

The relationship of these monolithic Nagara Temples in Himachal Pradesh with the Dharmanatha temple at Dhamner in Rajputana, dated about A.D. 800 is not only stylistic, but may have something to do with the interchange of cultures between the Pahari area and Rajasthan during the mediaeval period.

The elaboration of these Nagara style temples of Himachal Pradesh, from the monumental ambitions obvious in the buildings, show them to be more than provincial architecture. They are conceived by important craftsmen, working under wealthy princes, who were obviously inspired by the Hindu revival connected with the exaltation of Vishnu, the benign One as the Supreme God. These shrines must have been built in a comparatively peaceful period, because the elaboration is complex, the carving minute and the sculptural decorations fairly skilful.

These Himachal Pradesh temples are unquestionably significant of the height of imaginative power in temple architecture attained in this region.





MASRUR

Unlike in Central and South India, rock-cut temples are unknown in the Northern part of the country except the solitary example of one of Masrur in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.

The rock measuring nearly 160 feet in length and about 105 feet in width has been sculptured into a cluster of temples, unique in character, not only in the Himalayan region but of a rare type in India. The monument is a complex of shrines characterised by flat roof and a number of rising Sikharas.

The Masrur temple is situated on the top of a range of sandstone hills, some 2500 feet above the sea level and

commands a fine view of the snowcapped Dhauladhar to the north-east and of the Beas valley to the west. Just below the temple on the slope of the hills lies the hamlet of Masrur, where people seem to live in a self-contained small world of their own. The rough and long hill track, about eight miles long, provides the sole access to the temple from the ancient town of Haripur in Kangra.

The temple does not seem to have been visited by many people because of difficulty of access. It was examined for the first time in 1913 by Mr. Hargreaves of the northern circle of the Archaeological Department. But the temple does not seem to have attracted the attention of many people. From a distance it can hardly be distinguished



from the rocky hills, as it is badly worn out by the vicissitudes of weather. The temple suffered additional damage from the devastating earthquake of 1905.

On approaching it from Haripur, one can get a good view of it. But only when one comes from the smaller parallel ridge of the south-west and reaches near the temple, does the monolith assume a form and the Sikharas and the doorways become visible. The magnificence of the size and character of the temple unfolds itself as we pass through the south-east cut and view it from the other side.

The striking symmetry of the design, with its huge central spire, overcomes the viewer and one cannot but admire the highly talented carvers of the temple and their imaginative selection of the spot for the temple.

The temple is rich in remarkably deep-cut carvings around doorways and on the faces of the Sikharas. The carving of figures, wherever these are intact, is of a high quality comparable to the lively and expressive figure sculptures of Baijnath, though not of Bajaura images which are superior.

The temple is devoted to the worship of Rama, incarnation of Vishnu, and is known as Thakurdwara temple.

Note: There are stone temples in Mandi, in Nurpur and Kulu, of smaller size, with primitivist carvings of the 16th century period, which are mainly imitations of the more heroic structures of Masrur and Baijnath.

The wooden temple at Chatrahi is famous not for its architecture, so much as for the lovely bronzes, one of which is Shulpani Shiva and Parvati seated on Nandi, of 8th-9th century. This is in the same strain as the early mediaeval Chamba bronzes.

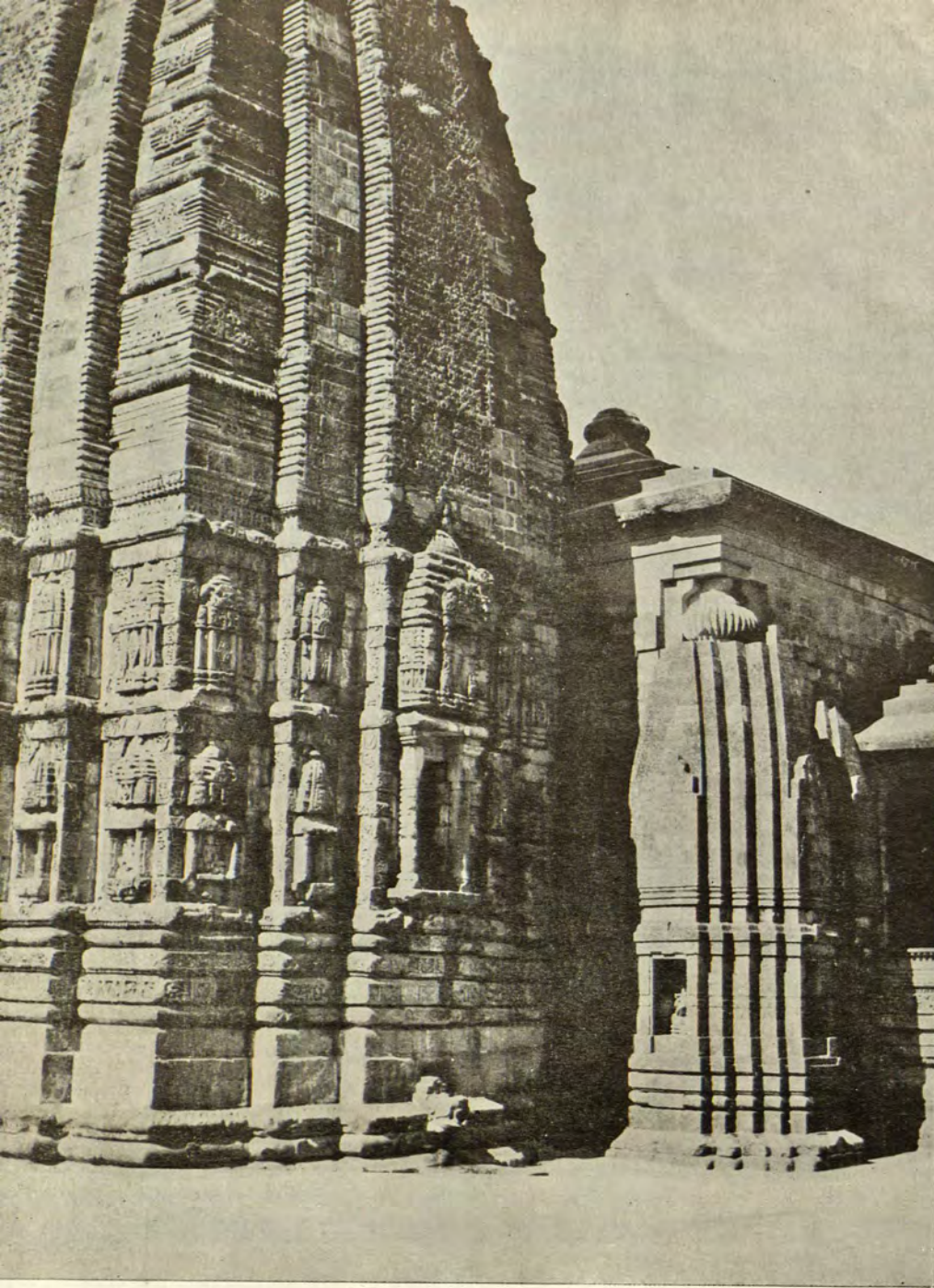
1. The giant monolithic carving of the Masrur temple is as ambitious a feat as the relief carving of Arjuna's penance in Mahabalipuram of the 6th century and Ellora of the 10th century.
2. A detail of the frieze from Masrur shows the delicate care taken by the sculptor in each detail. The scales of the fish and the dreamy upturned mouth show remarkable observation.
3. Detail of the entrance to the main shrine. The elaborate delicately chiselled floral decorations and the repeated figures are conceived as musical patterns deeply cut into the rock. The motifs resemble those in the early mediaeval tradition of Northern Indian temple structures.
4. The lively and joyful massive musician figures relate themselves to the wonderful group of musicians in Cave No. 7 in Aurangabad, except that the carving here shows a greater love of volume. Perhaps in Aurangabad the main figure of the dancer dwarfs the musicians, while these accompanists enjoy freer movements.

(Photos: P. N. Mago)





BAIJNATH



2

The concept of the temple, as the house and body of god, had come to be understood almost uniformly in India by the time of the Vaishnava revival in the early mediaeval period. The loving care shown in the binding together of all parts of this monument, indicates depth of feeling achieved even in this remote landscape.

The proportions of Baijnath temple are a remarkable feature of the shrine. The carving of the Sikhara stones, the artificial windows and the sculptures are integrated into the monumental mass, thus making architecture into sculpture and sculpture into architecture. The

central axis is so planned, that the scooped out spaces for images project the indwelling power. This power is expressed through the collateral gods housed in the niches of the projecting buttresses. The shadows of the niches relate back to the womb chamber sheltered beneath the Sikhara.

The total impact of the Baijnath shrine is heightened by the stone-paved courtyard, which gives the necessary space to go round the temple, as well as to absorb the lights and shadows from a sufficient distance.



3

1. The situation of the Baijnath temple, on a comparatively flat plateau not far removed, but a fair distance from the Dhauladhar shows an instinctive appreciation of the site where a small man-made mountain with its Sikhara peak, would talk arrogantly to the sky. Also it can be seen from miles away, and, though the hulk is not big, it creates the necessary feeling of reverence in the approaching worshippers. The carving is delicate and connects up with the emergent mediaeval tradition in the plains.
2. The sculpture of Nandi was probably a later addition, because of the fastidious details of the carving, which includes the hump. The rare Pahari sculptures of the early mediaeval period of this kind of figure are more stylised.
3. The dancing Ganesha is a fantastic adumbration, which is unusual in northern India, but it shows that the dance tradition was prevalent here in early mediaeval times though it died down later on.
4. The many-armed dancing Shiva is symptomatic of the essential mobility which characterised the carving of Pahari temples. This particular figure is related to the Mahishmardhani in the Bajaura temple, Kulu, in the fine handling of rhythmic lines and the flow of the chisel.
5. The dvarpal figures, with lyrical bends, show a love of cylindrical effect in the sculpture, which again anticipates this kind of emphasis in Bajaura, Kulu.

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)



4



5

BAJAURA



1



2

The monolithic impact of the Bajaura shrine suddenly confronts one as one goes towards the temple through the open fields surrounding it. Actually it is not a big construction. But its volume is heightened by the sculptures which integrate the walls into the mass. These cylindrical carvings have been wrought in the same stone. They are almost in the round, though they are relief sculptures, with their backs imbedded in the stone of the walls. The images express other energies than the indwell-

ing deity of the womb chamber. And they heighten the total impact of the monument, even more than the sculptures of Baijnath or Masrur, because the carvings are more skilful than the body of the shrine itself. Because of this emphasis on the carving of figures, almost in excess of the care bestowed on the main structure of the Sikhara, the Bajaura temple extends itself into the late phases of the early mediaeval buildings, when sculpture overwhelmed architecture and later possessed it almost completely.



3

1,2. This Vishnu is carved with a good deal of detailed care for decoration. And yet the whole composition communicates the vitality of the slender line, accentuated by the vertical figure, with its exquisite finish.

3. The Bajaura shrine is small and compact, but appears diminutive in relation to the tall range on the other side of the Beas river. The structure here is mainly used as a background for the sculptures, which heighten the outside of the shrine through the masterly carvings.

4. The Mahishamardhini achieves a nobility, almost reminiscent of the metal sculptures of Chamba. There seems to have been an obvious connection between the two traditions of metal and stone carving. The Goddess Durga seems to kill the demon king Mahishvara, symbolically, but such is the vitality implicit in her torso that the force in the Trisula and in the dragging of the demon king's hair with the hand seems to be an organic action.



4

5. The carving of the dvarpals in the doorway continues in the miniature figure, the cylindrical style of the bigger sculptures.

6. The cylindrical style was not suitable to the essentially voluminous rounded curves of the Ganesha figure. So this sculpture does not emerge as a harmonious carving.

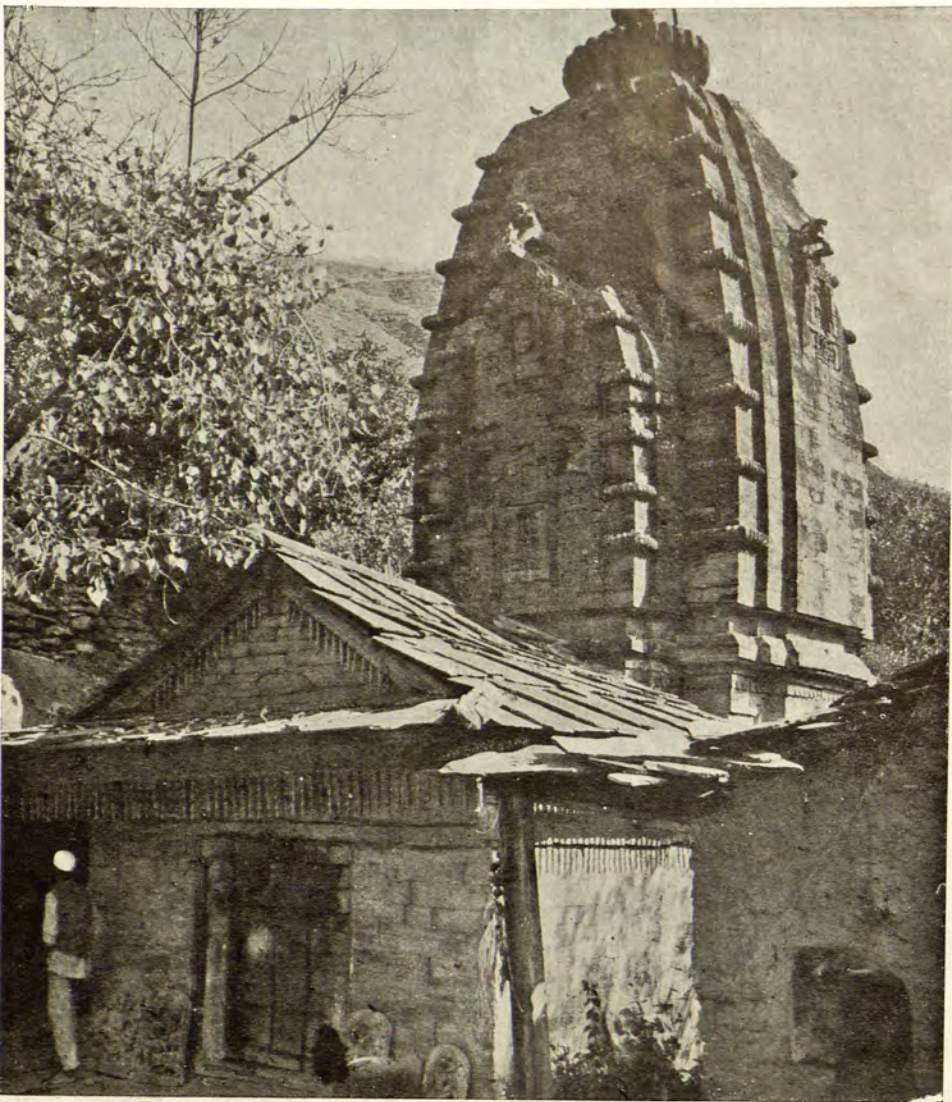


5



6

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)



1

NIRTH



2



1. The rather plain Sikhara of the temple at Nirth shows it to be a late construction of the 17th-18th century, when patronage in this area mainly came from the folk. The skill in the construction of the Sikhara is, however, maintained.
2. A primitivist Vishnu from Nirth is probably from the hands of a folk craftsman who can impart weight but has no feeling for grace.

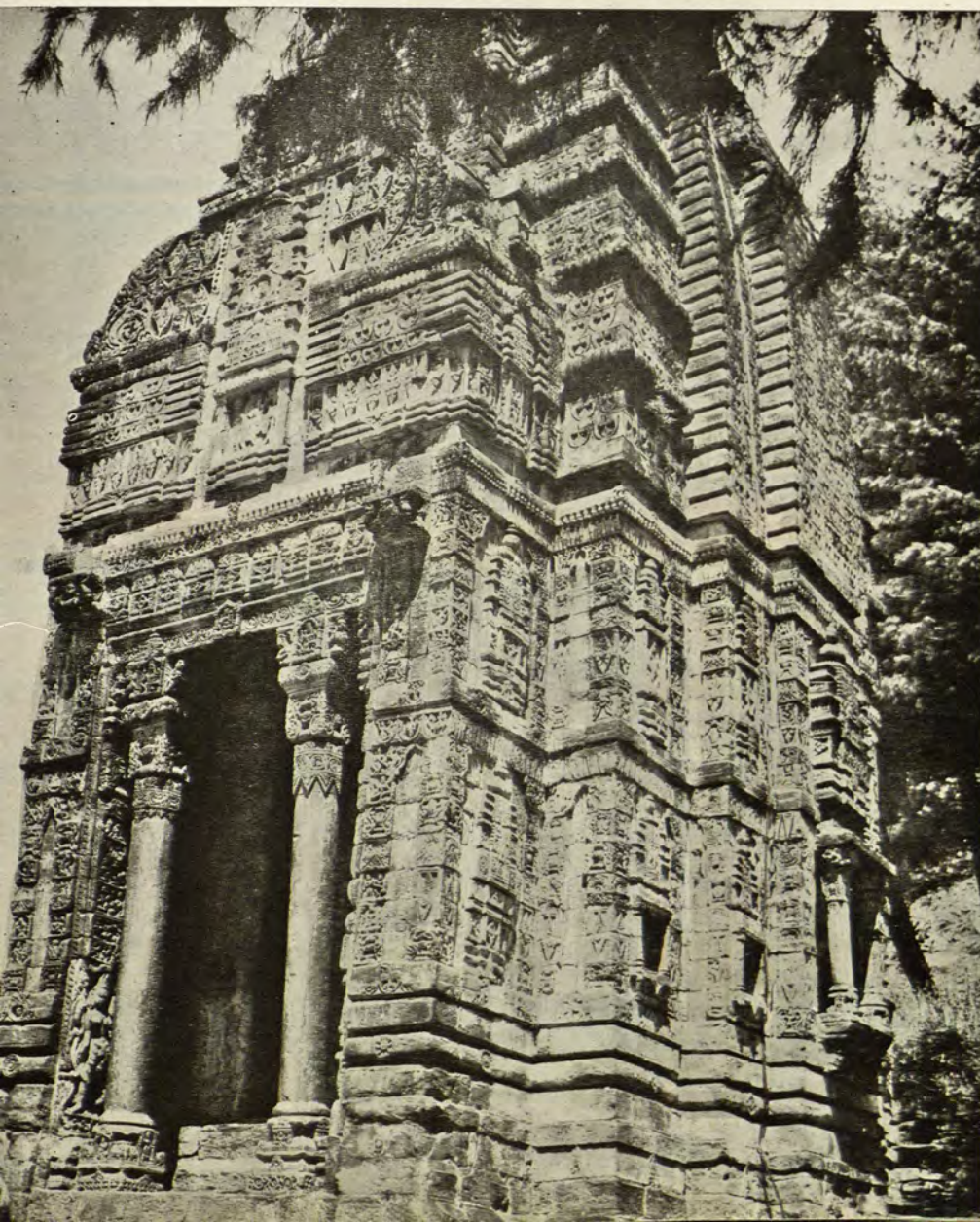
Khushala

1. The small elaborately carved shrine at Khushala in Kulu valley, shows the persistence of the mediaeval tradition even in the remotest areas. The Sikhara is elaborately decorative. The original sculpture may have been in the Bajaura cylindrical style.
2. This panel shows that chiselling was delicate and capable of achieving mobile conjugations.
3. The dvarpal is a lush miniature figure, indicative of vitality in the bigger sculptures in the alcoves, which have disappeared.

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)



2



3

BRAHMAUR



2

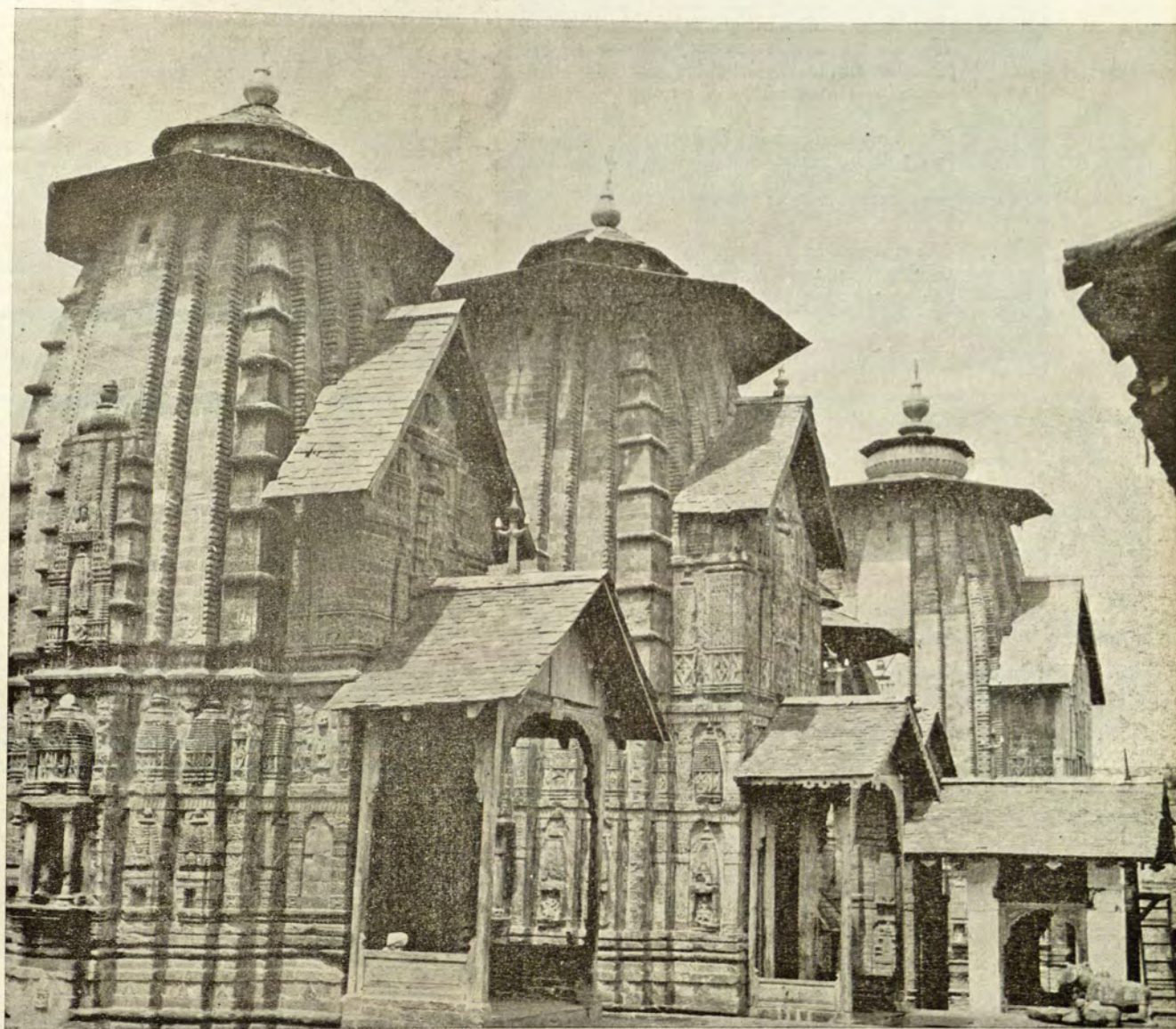


1

1. The Brahmaur shrine, in the now isolated ancient capital of Chamba state, is a household temple with an intimate air about it, as it is situated in the courtyard outside the modest palace. The chhatra, which has relations with Tibetan, Nepalese and Kashmir structures on top of wooden temples, lends a certain charm to the temple against the snowpeaks of the Himalayas. The carving here begins with a tradition of the early mediaeval structures in the Pahari area.
2. The Narasimha, man-lion, Avatar of Vishnu in bronze, is a massive image in a benign mood. Bronze casting was probably a superior technique in Brahmaur and Chhatrahi than stone carving.
3. The airy floating figures, with the foliage, show that the carver's chisel is sensitive and capable of creating mobility.

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)





CHAMBA

1. *The Laxmi Narayan temple in Chamba improves upon the Brahmaur structures in massiveness, complexity and space relations. Obviously, this is a later construction and the craftsman had developed greater skill, specially in building chhatris. The siting on the plateau, on the edge of the township, shows sensitive appreciation of the relation of the man-made peaks with the ranges on the sides.*



2. This finely chiselled bird from a fountain in Sarahan, near the Hindustan Tibet Road, shows the exquisite skill of the primitivist sculptor. The Pahari area occasionally throws up fine pieces like this, which, though late, show an unbroken continuity of the tradition of carving.

3. This heavy static carving is a late sculpture hewn by a folk craftsman.

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)

4. The woman on the horse is another forceful primitivist memorial figure from Nagar in Kulu valley emphasising the head of the horse.

(Photo: Jasleen Dhamija)



WALL PAINTINGS

As in other parts of the sub-continent, so in Himachal, the art of painting seems to have been practised on the walls of houses, temples and palaces, from the earliest times. Perhaps, as elsewhere, the magical drawing of appeasement was first made. In fact, the evil eye of the envious onlookers was confronted always on the doors of the hut with a demon-face while the shelter was being constructed. The decorations in cowdung and mud plaster on the floor of the hut, as well as the reliefs on the walls, and the white or red gerua pontilism, were similarly motivated. The use of colour in wall painting was handed down by primitive man himself.

During the historical periods, it is known that the rich patrons commissioned skilled craftsmen to carry out wall paintings in temples, shrines and palaces. These artists embroidered ageless motifs like the lotus (for the opening of the mind), the serpent (for the glide of the soul), the chakra (for the revolution of the wheel of life) into their designs. The foliage, the tree forms, as well as the animal and human and bird figures were abstracted and composed into space areas like the circle, the square or the rectangle, if the wall was combined. On larger walls, the colour energies were allowed to flow in linear rhythms, in free compositions, which derive their inspiration from the classical wall paintings of the cave temples of Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora, Sittavansal and Tasparang.

That the tradition of the central Peninsula had travelled in all directions is proved by the fact that the linear rhythm, the volumes, and the colours of western Tibet, owe almost everything, except the ethnic type of the figure, to Ajanta from the centuries before Christ, after the Ashokan unification of India. The message of the Buddha was carried through pictures from shrine to shrine. In this way, the Jataka stories became popular in the most remote regions.

Similarly, in the Gupta age as well as in the mediaeval periods, the iconography of Hindu myths and legends was propagated in almost every village through pictorial representation.

Always, the inanimate object was sought to be given living breath through the free folk design.

Thus the excellent wall paintings in Himachal Pradesh, such as those on the Nurpur Fort Temple, or in the Chamba and Kulu palaces, in Nadaun, in Sujampur Tira, Dada Seba, Arki, Dhamtal, Daramsal and elsewhere, were mostly done in the 17th-18th centuries. As, at that time, the miniature painting of the Mughal court at Agra had already become one of the finest development of court art in Asia, and its impulses were received via Basohli and a few principalities into the Pahari area, it is not quite clear how much the Himachal wall paintings owe to the rectangular picture frame of the Indo-Persian miniature. Certainly, quite a few of the paintings in the Sujampur Tira temple and elsewhere are enlarged miniatures. Also, the drawing and brushwork tend to the Mughal principle of 'decorative isolation'. But there are sufficiently large number of paintings in which colour energies are allowed to run freely on the walls, as in the Ajanta tradition painted with bigger brushes.

It is likely that the interchange of the Jain Kalpasutras and Buddhist palm-leaf manuscripts, in the early mediaeval

periods, carried the linear rhythm of the Deccan into the remotest corners of the country. The craftsmen travelled from construction to construction.

The walls of the Himachal Pradesh shrines, temples and palaces were, however, galvanised by forms which show original creative impulses, working on the old themes, in bold curved lines and deeply felt brush strokes.

The technique of wall painting seems to have been inherited by the craftsmen, from father to son, son to son.

The wall paintings of the Pahari area like wall paintings in other parts of our country are not Italian style frescoes but employ a different technique. The Italian term tempera can be applied for Indian wall paintings rather than fresco because the tempera technique involves the use of binding material which is soluble in water with gum emulsion or yoke of an egg. The Indian wall paintings give a 'light buy out' appearance as though they had been done in a thin medium, whereas the Italian fresco displays the thicker surface.

Preparation: The wall of laterite stone is plastered over with lime and sand. This Sudhialapa plastered wall is so called because Sudha powder made by burning conch is used. The powder is dissolved in a solution of molasses and one fourth of small peas or mash-ki-dal. A quarter of sand is added with unripened bananas boiled and pulped into a wooden paste. The mixture is strained daily for some days, then it is taken in small quantities and placed on a granite slab. The solution of molasses is sprinkled on it and ground into a soft butter paste.

This plaster is applied on the wall evenly. After this binding process of the wall, the surface when dry is rubbed with cold water. Then the wall is white-washed. The thickness of the plaster varies from $\frac{1}{2}$ " to more than 1". On this plastered surface the paintings are done with tempera or blended colours.

Sketching of figures in lines is first done in yellow colour on the wall. Then the red background colour is applied. After the distribution of the flat colours, shading is done with a fine brush by the stippling process to get curvaciousness. The ground being white, the white colour is not used. No varnish is applied.

Colours are kept in wet earthen pots. Red is prepared from harmesehi clay ground on stone slab with water. Black is made from burnt coconut crust, and ground. Green is made from Sang-i-sabz, the chips being broken and ground with water. Yellow is made from the clay of this colour and ground and strained. Blue is mixed from ultramarine and process blue-white is made from burnt marble chips drenched in water and filtered till curd-like substance emerges to be used.

There are two contrary theories about the origins of Pahari painting. Some people assert that as wall painting was the major tradition of India, and the folk always decorated their houses with magical, ritualistic and secular daubs of colour and pontilisms, therefore, the 17th-18th century Pahari miniatures absorb the colours and feeling of the folk paintings. The classicists believe that wall painting in the palaces, temples and forts was mainly enlarged miniature painting which derived from the Mughal central court. The truth is that though the base of the wall paintings was mainly the folk tradition, at one remove or another, the sophisticated court art of Agra, Delhi and Lahore, did lead to higher craftsmanship, diversified colours and intricate compositions by supplying models of miniatures or through the coming of some artists from the Mughal studios.



1

1. This war scene from the Akhand Chanderi palace wall is a view of the armies engaged in a war. The confrontation is not dynamic, but the glory of the patron was perhaps satisfied by exhibiting a bigger army for Chamba than of the adversary. The drawing is fastidious and clear. The colours of the original glow.
2. This wall painting from Kulu in vertical panels is unique and one of the largest in the Pahari area.

Except in Ajanta, where small cubes were used towards the 7th century for decorative painting on the walls, and in one or two cases in South India, the comic-strip style of vertical panels was seldom used in the decoration of Indian walls. The drama here is accentuated—the contrasting colours intensify the moods and the narrative of the story becomes continuous, as in a bardic recital.

(Photo: Jagdish Mittal)



WOODWORK



A number of vessels are made out of wood. Wooden vessels for bringing water and wooden bowls for eating are common in Spiti, Lahul, Kinnaur as well as in Brahmaur and Pangl.

In Brahmaur area there is a special village known as Koonal which prepares wooden vessels on a simple crude lathe. The Chamba Museum still has some of the old vessels from this village which show a well-developed skill in handling the material.

Churala tehsil in Chamba district has large wooden boxes used for storage of grains. Simple decorations are prepared on these boxes. Geometrical forms are used to emphasise the shape of the object. Whereas simplified abstractions of human or animal forms are engraved in the centre of the boxes.

The wood carving of these domestic objects is quite different in character from that prepared on the temples or in the homes of the well-to-do. Very primitive patterns not too deeply engraved are worked on boxes, doors, as well as the lintels. Nagbel is a zigzag line which combines the serpentine pattern, with three or four petalled flowers on each side of the line. Dori is a continuous line of flowers. Kutheri Phool is a multi-sided figure which is sometimes enlarged and the pattern is laid into a jali so as to serve as a ventilator. Circles and the swirl as well as the spiral, are a common motif in the low relief wood carving.

Wooden masks which are used for ritual dances are common in the Himalayan areas. Two distinct types of masks are found here. Some are those used in the monasteries of Spiti and Kinnaur and others are those which have a more secular origin, even though they are maintained in temples.

The masks used in the monasteries are the typical stylised forms, common to the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism as practised all over the Himalayan ranges and beyond in Tibet. Each character is worked according to the strict iconographic form which governs all aspects of this religio-ritualistic art. The masks represent the characters of these mystery plays which are performed against the fantastic background of high snow-clad mountains with narrow deep gorges and isolated valleys. The weird sound of the long trumpets and the deep notes of the *Bam* slowly conjures up the scene, as the characters begin to emerge with slow, deliberate movement into colourful, fierce and dynamic forms.

The masks of the lower mountains are simplified and retain certain human characteristics. They have a touch of humour and an element of sadness.







3

1. The finely carved pictorial images on this door have led scholars to trace the original painting in Chamba to the earlier wood carvings in the Brahmaur palaces. The style of the figures seems to have been imported from Basohli, with which Chamba had intimate connections, of love and hate, through the 17th-18th century. The relief carving of the four princely figures is adroitly done, and, obviously, the figures were painted over these decorations and the copper plaques embossed by the early Chamba artist might well have laid the foundations for Chamba painting. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.)

2,3,4,5. Details of figure 1. (Photos: D. H. Sahiar)



4





6. The masks representing the 'other mind' of demons and gods and kings, were frequently employed in the festivals of the folk in the Himalayas. The influence of Tibetan Buddhist demonology may have penetrated into the region. This fantastic long-haired lopsided, horned and long-toothed incarnation is surely a dead ancestor to be appeased. The craftsmanship is highly ingenious. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba.)



7. The second mask with a symbolic crown is almost akin to the Greek mask. The simplification of the face adds horror to the hollows of the eyes and the mouth. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. Photos: D. H. Sahiar.)



8

8. *The availability of timber in the forests of the Himalayas led to the use of wood for building temples. The contiguity of western Tibet led to the import of pagoda style. The Sikhara was replaced by a series of ascending wooden peaks topped by brass kalsas. The result is a new style of temple construction in the Himalayas, which has lessons for those who wish to use local materials in the new architecture.*
- 9,10. *The pillars from the wayside shrine of Jagat-Sukh near Manali in the Kulu valley, show folk ingenuity and skill in wood carving even in the 19th century. The tradition has now died down.*

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)



9



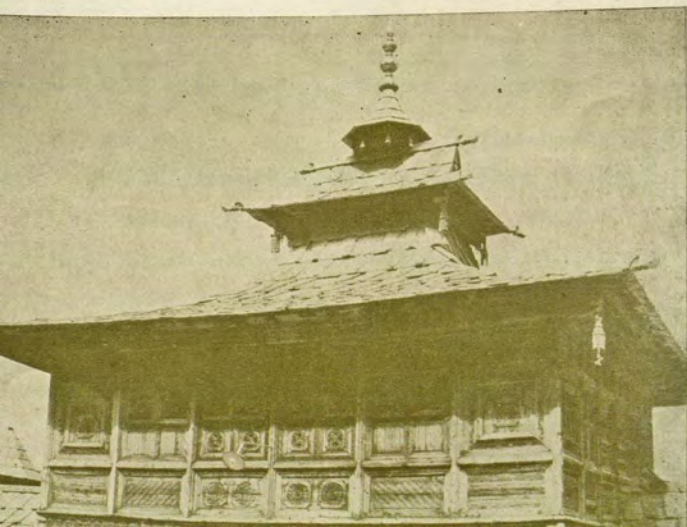
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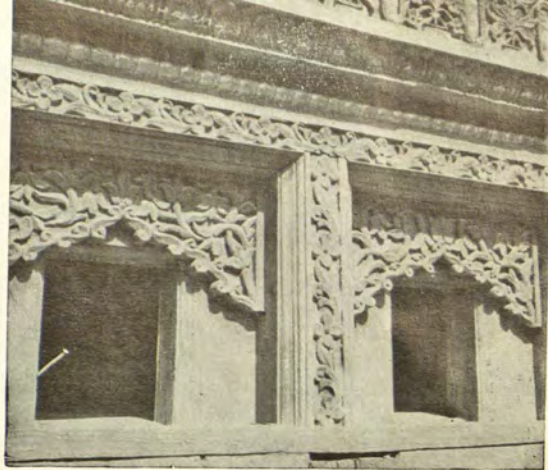


11



12





15

11. The chisel is highly fluent as in the decorations in the panels of the doorway.
12. The carvings from Brahmaur show clear affinities with the cylindrical figures of the bronzes of this area.
13. The fine wooden temple in Sarahan, on the edge of the Hindustan-Tibet Road, obviously owes something to the western Tibetan influence in its structure. The use of wood to enclose stone on the walls, without mortar, owes itself to the genius of the folk builders of the remote Rampur Bushair state in Himachal Pradesh.
14. Detail of the main shrine.
15. Detail of carving on the windows of the main shrine at Sarahan.
16. This village temple also shows the continuity of folk talent in construction even in the present day.
17. The elaborate Rath of the gods on the wayside in Sarahan shows that the carpenter's craft in Himachal can still produce original design.

(Photos: D. H. Sahiar)

16



ARTS AND CRAFTS

It is under the shadow of High Himalayan mountains that men and women in Himachal Pradesh live their life—imbibing their strength and looking up in awe at the crests towering above. They transmute their massive form into a vision of living spirit. Here also reside the *Dev* and *Devtas*, who take on different forms. They need to be propiated from time to time—when you seek their protection, wish them to intercede on your behalf against malignant spirits who might harm you. They embody the unknown factor in life, which can suddenly unleash a fury, make a man lose his way in a storm and meet a lonely cold death; or they may suddenly reveal their many-sided beauty.

It is in this atmosphere that the people develop a heightened response and awareness to shape, colour and sound. Their lilting melodies have a haunting quality. Their paintings vibrate with life and are yet delicate in treatment. Their wooden sculpture has a forceful strength and the metal masks of the *Devs* and *Devtas* through which the spirit speaks to the people, have a benign yet an enigmatic expression.

The arts and crafts of Himachal Pradesh have grown in this atmosphere. The art is essentially religious. In the upper ranges one sees a curious amalgam of local beliefs, the Central Asian influence of Boy-po as absorbed into *Vajrayana* and also the effect of Vaishnav and Shaivite cults of the Indian plains. Many influences which have survived the passage of time have given the symbolic decorative designs a richness and significance because of their validity in life.

Generation after generation have come and lived here, absorbed the local customs and in turn been absorbed themselves. They have not left behind any gigantic traces of their culture. Tucked away in inaccessible valley may be seen a few temples carved in the robust cedrus deodara which have withstood destruction at the hands of nature and vandals. High up in the mountains guarded by snowbound passes and protected by the temperamental *Devi* of the pass, who barely tolerates an incursion into her domain and may hide the face of the pass from an unworthy soul, are few Gompas with the sacred *Goingkhangs*, the war gods chapel, still maintained by devoted monks of Lahul and Spiti.



METALWARE

One of the most interesting crafts of Himāchal Pradesh is the art of working on metal. The metal workers in the more inaccessible areas of Kinnaur, Lahul and Spiti work in all materials. They make delicate silver jewellery, silver ritual vessels, iron pieces, intricate locks which are sculpturesque in form, brass eating and cooking vessels as well as images for worship.

In the lower areas of Kulu, Chamba, Kangra and Mahasu, specialised craftsmen work on jewellery, metal casting, and engraving. Their designs are based on the traditions prevalent in the plains, though influenced by local traditions. The gods and goddesses are from the Hindu pantheon and the symbolic motifs are also Hindu.

The sculptures of these areas have a primitive force and simplicity of expression. The *Devi* with a *trishul* in her hand treads a demon under her foot, as the tiger, her *vahana*, springs from her loins with his one fore-paw digging into her thigh while the other is placed on the *trishul*.

In another depiction of *Devi*, she is the powerful *Mahishasuramardhani*. The whole plaque is dominated by her eight arms and the mask-like face which has a *tilak* in the form of a third eye. The body practically merges into the demoniac buffalo. The tiger, her *vahana*, is seen in a corner, its fierce face accentuating the mood.

In a depiction of *Krishna*, a big cow with a *chhatra* dominates over the various forms of *Krishna*—*Shri Krishna* as *Gopal Bal*, as *Navanita Priya* and again as the Divine Flutist. The kneeling form of *Garuda* with folded hands and uplifted face and also the metal worked *mohras* of *Devs* and *Devtas* are made specially as an offering to the temple. These are some of sculptured figures prepared in these areas.

The style of metalware from Lahul, Spiti and Kinnaur has the dual influence of India on one hand and Central Asian traditions on the other. The motifs quite often are those derived from the *Vajrayana* tradition of Lamaistic Buddhism. The Buddhist images which are worshipped in the monasteries and Gompas are generally brought from outside. A few simple images which are for worship by the villagers are locally prepared. An interesting sculpture form is the symbol of 'Lord of the Soil', which is placed on the crest of Buddhist shrines. A leering skull of iron or silver has a crown of a flaming *trishul*. The *trishul* is worked in iron while the flames are either in gold or in brass. The strange grotesque form glints in the sun against the background of snow-bound mountains and clear blue skies.

The method of casting of images all over Himachal Pradesh is *cire perdu*, lost wax process. The image is first made in wax and then shaped by hand with the help of flat wooden pieces and metal needles.

The prepared wax image is then covered with a thin coating of fine clay taken from the bed of the river, and dried in the shade. A thick coating of clay is then given to the covered wax figure, keeping however an opening through which the molten metal would be poured. After this the clay is fired and the molten metal is poured into the cavity created by the loss of wax and the metal image is then formed. Following the same method except that the core of the image is prepared out of clay and then covered with wax, the hollow images are also prepared here. After the image has been taken out of this clay mould, it is chiselled and the finer details are brought out. Some times the eyes of the image are made separately of silver or gold and fixed to the image.

In Chamba district large figures of *vahanas*, such as the tiger for *Devi* or the *Nandi* for *Shiva* are made out of beaten metal. In many cases the *Moharas* which are offerings to the temple, are also made out of sheet metal specially when precious materials such as silver and gold are brought into use. Even today there are a few master-craftsman who specialise in this type of work. The sheet of metal used is generally 1/10th of an inch in thickness, and deep repousse work is prepared by using a lac pitch. This style of repousse work is also used effectively in covering the door ways leading to important temples, such as the temple in Sarahan and at Kothi in Kinnaur district.

A number of ritual objects for worship in the temples are also cast by the metal workers. These forms are the traditional Buddhist forms used in Tantric rituals such as the *ghanta* with the handle in the shape of the *Vajra*, a complete *Vajra* or *dorji* as well as beautifully cast incense holders. Brass *kalash* are also prepared for keeping holy water. Ritual cups known as *kargyul* of Kinnaur are famous. Leepa valley in Kinnaur district has a concentration of metal workers. They were so well known for their workmanship that traders came from Western Tibet to carry away silver engraved vessels prepared by them.

Items for domestic use are mostly prepared out of brass or bronze. Interesting shapes are generally found in the specialities of the area. The *dongbo* is a special cylindrical shape meant for making salt tea. The shape is essentially made out of wood. It is, however, decorated with silver plaques decorated with motifs of the lotus and sometimes the seven lucky signs.

Musical instruments are also prepared by the metal workers. The most popular musical instruments are *Ransinga*, *Karnal*, the *Bam*, the *Dhol* and *Nagara*. *Ransinga* is a large 'S' shaped trumpet. This forms an essential part of every ceremony. It is with the loud gay notes of this trumpet which resounds over the valley that any festival starts. *Karnal* is a long pipe which starts from a small opening for the mouth and ends in a flower like trumpet. Very delicate relief work is done all over the surface.

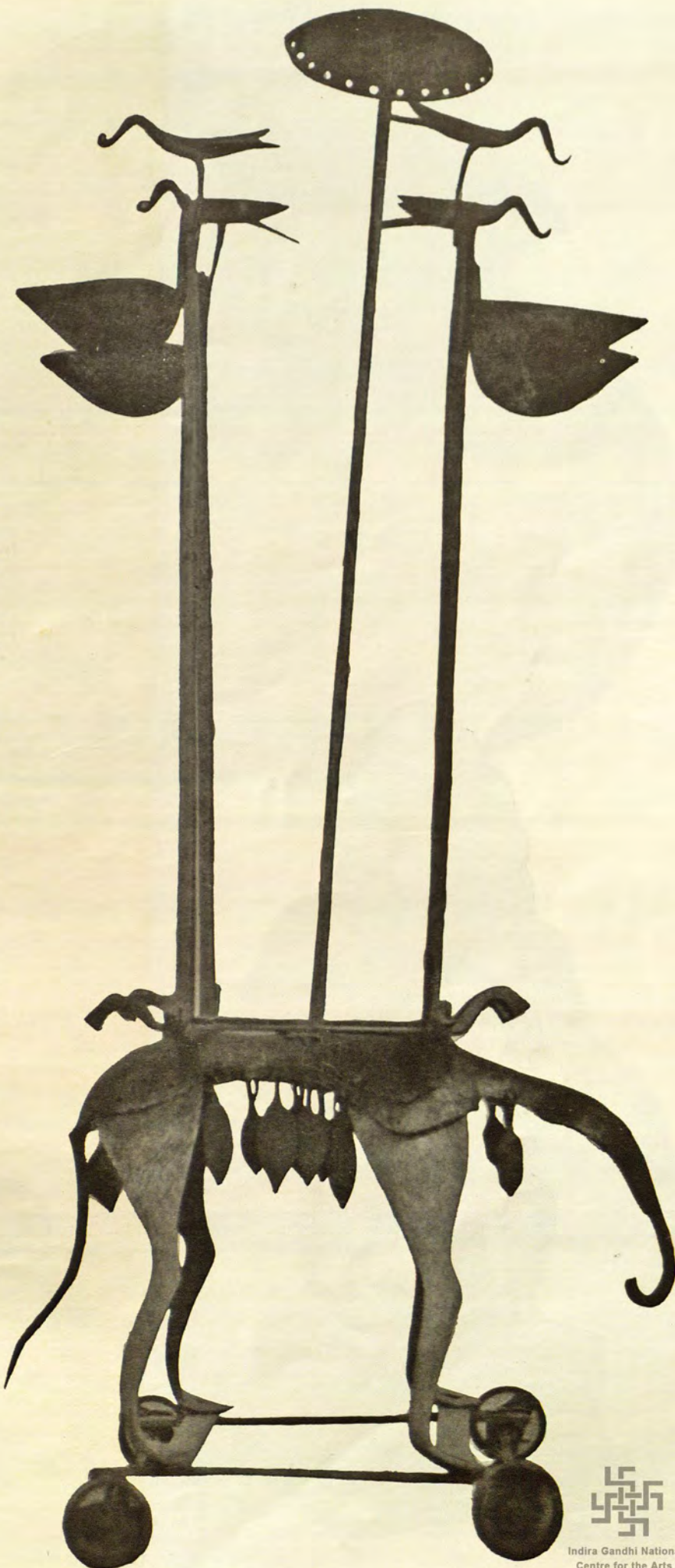


The metal caster's craft is one of the most vital tradition of the Himachal region. As the age of the gods still persists, the casting of images, the polishing and the scooping, continues to be done by highly accomplished craftsmen.

1. A ritual lamp from Chamba, with four "Deepams", with a bird perched above, along with a central "chhatra" balanced on an elephant on four wheels. This fantasy in brass of a lamp stand for a temple anticipates Alexander Calder. (Photo: Ram Dhamija)

Both the lost wax, and the direct method of casting bronze in moulds, were known in Himachal tradition. The methods have been continuous. So one can only date the bronzes from the mediaeval to the late 19th century through the rubbings out of detail of the older images and the presence of detail in the later ones. The vitality persists even as in the praise offered to the godlings.

2. A kneeling Garuda from Chamba, with folded hands and uplifted face (Collection: Jasleen Dhamija; Photo: Ram Dhamija.)
3. Another metal sculpture from the temple. The treatment is very reminiscent of the Central Indian casting of deities. It is possibly 'Nag Deota', since the sides are decorated with four snakes. The straight vertical lines have an interesting balanced composition. (Photo: Ram Dhamija.)
4. The sculptures have a primitive force and a simplicity of expression. The four armed 'Devi' has a Trishul in her hand, while she treads a demon under foot. The tiger, her 'Vahana' springs from her loins with one fore-paw digging into her thigh while the other is placed on the Trishul. (Collection: Jasleen Dhamija; Photo: Ram Dhamija.)
5. The ritual pitcher, with the beaky mouth and kubera-bellied body, was familiar in every temple of Himachal.
6. A large metal pitcher, with a thinned mouth for pouring the water, shaped like a 'diya' from Chamba (Photo: P. N. Mago).
7. The mask incarnations of Devi show that brassware technique have remained highly accomplished craft in Himachal Pradesh. (Photo: Jasleen Dhamija)





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Indira Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts



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6



WOOL WEAVING

The high mountain areas inhabited by people of different cultures extends from Lahul, Spiti and right up to Kinnaur. Over the centuries their contacts were with the people of the Indian plains as well as with Western Tibet. This led to the growth of a culture influenced by the Central Asian traditions on one hand and the Hindu tradition on the other. Many a tribe settled down in remote corners retaining its traditional culture over the centuries. Even today in some remote corners of Himachal Pradesh, one can see glimpses of nomadic culture of paleolithic times. The Gaddis, the Gujjars, the Pangevals, and the people of Lahul, Spiti and Kinnaur lead a life not very different from what their ancestors must have led a thousand year ago.

A strange coincidence in Pangl set us thinking on the origin of the word 'Arya' in the area. Here some of the Sudras were called 'Aryas'. One wondered if a small band of Aryans had strayed into the area and had been subjugated by the local inhabitants and according to tradition, the conquered people were made to do the menial work thus being placed amongst the Shudras.

It is only in the last few years that detailed studies have been conducted by anthropologists, on the origins of different people—their social customs, way of life—settled in the remote corners of Himachal Pradesh. The monographs on villages selected from different areas, by the Census Commission, have also made a detailed study of the habits and social customs of the different communities inhabiting the village.

Himachal Pradesh, being a high altitude area, with abundance of sheep, goat and the easy availability of good quality Pasham from Tibet, wool weaving played an important part in the life of the people. In the plains use of silk at time of worship is considered auspicious; in the hills only wool is considered auspicious for particular ceremonies which require purification of a person. Even the sacred thread (Janau) is made out of wool. The marriage dress, the dress for ceremonial occasions, and for all festivals, has to be made from wool. In certain areas entry into the kitchen of a family is not allowed unless they are wearing woollen clothes.

The origin of wool weaving in the hill areas cannot be fixed, but it is likely that from very early times, when man acquired the skill to be able to spin and weave materials from bark of trees or fibres of plants, in the plains, this skill must have been also transformed in the hill areas to the weaving of woollen fabrics.

Weaving was known to the inhabitants of India more than 5000 years ago. A piece of cloth dyed with madder was found attached to a silver vase in the Mohenjodaro

excavations. This established that the inhabitants of the area not only grew cotton, knew how to spin and weave it, but had also mastered the art of dyeing cotton, with the use of mordants, which is more difficult material to dye than wool. Ancient literature also has a number of references to weaving. The Rig Veda uses the simile of the weaving of the warp and the weft threads as the passing of the days and nights. Usha, the goddess of Dawn, has been described as clothed in radiance. Another hymn mentions, 'May Dawn and Night do their work well for us; they who turned towards each other weave the outstretched warp.'

The only historical reference that we come across to the use of wool in India is amongst the archaeological finds of Sir Auriel Stein in Central Asia. Wooden tablets inscribed with data of trade between India and Central Asia were found by him in Central Asia. One of the products mentioned was 'Namdis' which is the woollen Namdah. We have another much later reference which mentions that the Empress Mumtaz Mahal is credited with having discovered the art of wool weavers of Himachal Pradesh. In the 17th century an expedition to the hill areas returned with fabrics woven with intricate designs for the Queen, who was so impressed by their texture, their designs, that she gave them royal patronage which 'elevated their products to the same level as the fine woollens from Kashmir and Turkistan.'

Raw Material

Over the entire area of Himachal Pradesh sheep breeding by the inhabitants so as to meet their own requirements is common. Generally two types of sheep are reared in the area. They are known as 'Gaddi' in the Chamba District and 'Rampur Bushahri' in the Mahasu and Sirmur areas. In the upper reaches the Pashmina goat is reared as well as used for carrying provisions, which are mostly of salt or of food grains. No stress was laid on breeding in the rural areas, with the result that mixed coloured sheep having white, black, fawn and grey colours were bred. It is only in the recent years that experimentation in breeding of hardy local sheep, mixed with imported sheep, which would give better and more wool and would also be suitable to the climate in Himachal Pradesh, has been carried out by the Government Sheep Breeding Farms.

Originally three types of wool were locally available: Byangi, Imboo and Desar. Byangi wool, which is finest of the three, has a long staple of five inches and comes from the Kinnaur area. Shepherds who keep the flocks are nomads. For half the year they live in areas above 8,000 ft. As winter approaches they move downwards using their sheep as beast of burden.

Imboo is the soft wool from the first shearing of the lamb. The staple length of the fibre varies from 2" to 4".

Desar is of a coarser quality and is from the sheep which do not migrate.





Processing of wool

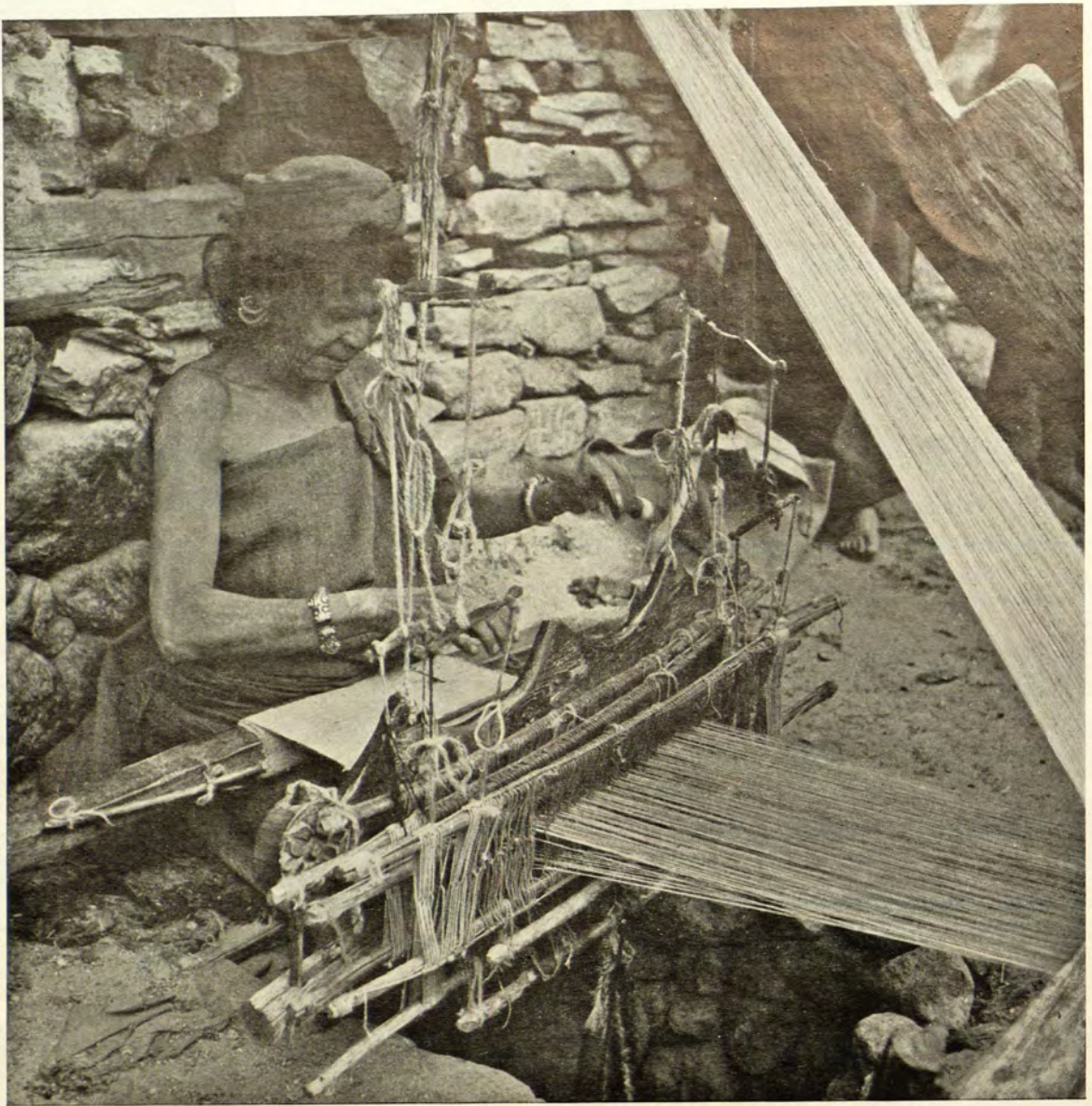
Each family has small quantity of wool to meet its own requirements. Sheep are sheared twice a year and the wool carded and spun by the family. The traditional method of carding was with the use of a comb attached to a stick kept vertically on a support. After sorting out the wool and removing the dead hair, the wool was teased into slivers locally known as “puni” or “phaha”. After this the members of the family, right from small children to aged men and women, move about their work or bask in the sun spinning the wool with the simple “takli” which is generally made out of wood. The spinning wheel was introduced later and did not gain in popularity until recent years, as it necessitated sitting down to spinning, while spinning with takli could be done as they moved about. It is a common sight to see the children moving with the sheep with a ‘takli’ in their hand, old women basking in the sun, keeping an eye on the toddlers while they spin wool on the takli, men carrying goods to market or moving the cattle to higher pastures moving with the takli. Spinning was never counted as extra work, which took their time but a part of their life, which came to them easily. After the spinning was completed the weaving was done by ‘Julaha’, the weaver, each area having its special Julahas who would be paid generally in kind rather than in money. In certain areas such as

in Kulu, parts of Chamba District, the people have their own looms and weave their own requirements.

A study of the different types of ‘takli’ used in Himachal Pradesh is interesting. The whorl was of different varieties. Some of them had middle spindles with the circular disc of wood; others had small hooks at the end of the spindle. Some of the wooden spindles had a long notch which gave a stronger twist to the thread and produced longer and more uniform thread. The spinners of Pashmina, which generally came from Lahul, Spiti or from Western Tibet, were skilled in the producing of very fine uniform thread used for superior quality woollen garments.

The Weaving Process

The simple pitloom, with a throw shuttle attachment, was the normal loom used over the centuries by the weavers of Himachal Pradesh. The frame of the loom comprises a beam at both ends to which the warp threads are tied. Quite often it is supported by four posts and sometimes by six. The pedals attached to the warp threads to form the shed or opening of the warp. The loom is normally prepared by the local carpenters and simple shuttles made out of hollow bamboos or wood, are prepared by the weavers themselves. The simple



shuttle made by the weaver is known as 'Nalu'. The width of the loom is narrow so that one weaver while sitting at the loom can throw the shuttle from side to side throwing it with one hand and catching it with the other. This meant that the shawls and blankets were woven in two pieces and had to be joined in the centre.

Normally the weave of the material is the simple tabbi weave or twill. The patterns woven on the border or across the border are by introduction of different coloured threads as part of the weft itself. Extra weft weaving is not common. The weaving of the coloured patterns is by introducing coloured threads as the weft, by twisting the thread with the warp and weaving it into

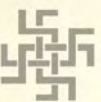
the warp. As the colour changes the threads are interlocked with the next colour or the background colour, and the weaving continues with the colour, so that the colours appear solid and give a brilliant effect. Basic colours, indigo blue, deep green, orange, chrome yellow, deep red, and black are used for the patterns. The background colour is normally the natural colour of the wool ranging from white to fawn, grey and black.

Designs

The decorative motifs throughout this area have a similarity in their use of colour and form. They are mostly geometrical, using blocks of colour to build up a pattern. The influence of Central Asian motifs can be seen in the



Colourful border of a Kinnaur shawl. (Blocks: Courtesy, Public Relations Department, Himachal Pradesh).



use of chorten as a common motif, the key design, and also linked 'swastiks' are the basic patterns. These designs are prepared on the cross borders of the 'Dohrus', a large woven shawl worn by the women from shoulder to ankle, and on the shawls which are worn by them over their shoulders. The Pattis or Pattu and blankets generally carry simple check or square designs; they build their checks and squares out of the natural wool colours.

Blankets with black and white checks and large squares are typical of the Gaddis of Brahmaur, Chamba area.

The Pattu and Dohrus of Churaha Tehsil in Chamba district are also very famous. They weave Pattus and Pattis in different patterns such as Sada, Charkhana (squares), Solak (an intricate pattern built up with checks), and Kamli (a double black blanket).

In Pangti area they have a similar style of weaving. The speciality of the area is a floor carpet, Thobi, made from goat's hair. Here the warp is vertical rather than horizontal as in the case of other weaves.

Fine soft blankets known as Gudmas are woven in Kinnaur. They are made of soft flossy wool, which is long-fibred. With the help of a comb one side of the Gudma is brushed hard and the fibres teased out so that it gives the effect of angora. This double blanket is woven in natural wool coloured stripes or in white and set off by a wide crimson-stripe at the two ends. The blanket is light and very warm.

In Kinnaur they also weave a rough carpet made of goat's hair known as Kharcha, Chuktu and Chugdan; a woollen floor covering and a cover are made locally for their personal use.

The weavers of Kinnaur district are famous for the coloured designs woven on the cross borders of Dohrus and shawls worn by the women as well as on the mufflers and the legs of pyjamas woven for use of the men on festive occasions. Some of the more interesting ones are 'Gau', similar to a representation of the Gordian knot, enclosed in a solid colour rectangle; here it derives its name from the pendent worn by women. 'Chatham' has a big cross in a deep colour with smaller crosses at each end. The pattern is generally worked in three colours. 'Chholo' is built up of red and white rectangles. 'Gurgur' is built up by using a reversed 'V'. The 'Chorten' derives its form from the 'Buddhist' stupa built on the wayside, or in commemoration of a pious act. The 'Dorji' also figures in the patterns, and has two lozenges on each end of a straight line. The key design of Central Asia is commonly used, as well as the Swastik in a number of combinations. The overall effect is brilliant.

Similar patterns are woven in Kulu and Kangra areas also. According to the local weavers, this style of designing was introduced here a hundred year ago from Kinnaur. Some of the old weavers mention that they originally came from Rupa in Kinnaur District and settled here. Earlier the designs used in Kulu and Kangra were

essentially checks, which were known as Lungi Dhari; the patterned stripes are a later innovation. The 'Dohru' woven by the village Julahas for use by the local women now are exquisite in its choice of colours and distribution of pattern. An exquisite combination—a black Dohru known as Dhumkuru (Smoke work) has a red border, with temple forms going into the body, and a rich cross border, worked out in red, green and yellow. Another variation has checks on the body which tones down the contrast, yet retaining a rich but harmonious effect of colours.

The patterns worked on the cross borders have interesting local names—Bulbul Chashm (Nightingale's eye), Lahariya (waves). In the former the Lizenga of light colour has a dark dot and a dark surround, the latter gives the effect of ripples by introducing zig-zag patterns in different colours. Chirdi (birds) are small crosses in different colours distributed over a single colour background. Gudi (doll) is a stylized human form with raised hands as though in dance. Hanju (tears) are rectangular forms which make one think of the tears the beloved sheds for her lover far away. Dabbidar Kiru (spotted snake) has a flowing zig-zag design which runs horizontally over the surface. Ganesh is represented by the Swastik. Another interesting pattern is 'Deware-Chin' (the wall of China). These patterns are so stylized that they have more or less lost their identity, which can only be conjectured by knowing their name.

Lahul and Spiti also have their special weaves. Here the spinning and the weaving is done in the house and they do not have a separate Julaha community to do the weaving. In Lahul they produce a coarse, loosely woven material for their personal use. A coarse carpeting known as Chali, similar to the Thobis of Pangti, is also woven here.

Spiti weaves much finer cloth though not as fine as that of Kinnaur. Three types of woollen materials are woven. The 'therma' which is of a fine quality is light and generally dyed a red colour with the use of local vegetable dyes. 'Parug' is thick and rough material. 'Shama' is thick but smooth cloth.

Over the years, commercialisation of these designs has led to the fading away of the strength of the original. The Kulu shawls woven in Chamba, Kulu and Mandi are a pale copy of the original shawls. The material may be softer, the length and width more suitable for the city dweller but the rich designs, their strong colour combinations and the intricate woven patterns are lost.

In the remoter areas, however, the traditional weaves continue to be practised. Those which are woven for weddings have the traditional patterns woven with skill and care. Even the lower part of the woollen pyjamas worn by the men have exquisite patterns delicately worked which extend from the ankle to the knee. The Himachalis, during a festival or a marriage are a gay and colourful sight, dressed in their very best, and with a profuse use of silver jewellery, their caps decorated with feathers and flowers, their gay laughter, their love of music and dance and a zest for life, combined with their beautiful costumes, make the occasion a happy and picturesque one.

EMBROIDERIES

1

Chamba Rumal conjures up an image of an embroidered Pahari painting, which uses cream coloured, hand-woven cotton muslin as its canvas and silk of soft muted colours as its medium for delineating scenes from Pahari miniatures. This embroidery is not confined to Chamba; it is practised all over the hill areas. Over the years this embroidery has become identified with the name "Chamba Rumal"; possibly because the finest rumals with the subject matter of the Baramasa, Ragini and the Krishna theme and based on the Pahari Kalam were prepared in Chamba. (They occur in other areas also and should be called 'Pahari Rumals'.—Editor).

The method of embroidery is very simple. On an unbleached handspun and hand-woven cotton cloth, the design is drawn over the entire surface. It is then embroidered with silken threads in the double satin stitch, which comes out exactly the same on both sides. The threads are handled so that no knots are visible and the finished piece is 'Dourakha', reversible. The outlines wherever necessary are worked with the use of stem-stitch.

Two styles of embroidery were practised all over the hill areas. One was the folk style. Here the drawing was done by the women. The forms were simplified and the drawing primitive, and in the resulting distortion, the intrinsic quality of the form was emphasized. In the more classical style, the drawing was done by well-known painters of the Pahari style of the painting. They used the 'Khakas', for making the drawings on cloth, which were also used by them for making miniature paintings on paper. The painter also indicated the colours to be used for embroidering the piece. It is possible that the same woman would embroider a 'Choli' in the folk style on the one hand and also prepare a Rumal with the highly stylized Pahari style of painting on the other. Thus we see that these two styles developed side by side and became a part of the life of the people.

The original form of embroidery must have been derived from the folk tradition of embroidery. The simplest form of embroidery in satin stitch with the outlines worked in stem-stitch can be seen on the small embroidered caps, known as 'Joji'. These are worn by women in the more isolated areas of Churah and Pangri in Chamba District. The round Joji has a long tail which hangs on the back. The embroidery is prepared on the round upper part of the Joji as well as on the tail. Generally the pattern is geometrical, with a circular motif in the centre of the cap with another geometrical design going down the back.

The Cholis of the women and the caps worn by the men, which are embroidered in the folk style, use mirrors to emphasise some of the designs. This shows the influence of the plains, since the use of mirrors is restricted to the sandy desert areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Sind. A number of Rajputs had settled down in the hill areas because of internecine war and later to escape religious persecution, and it is possible that the use of mirrors in this embroidery was introduced by them. The backless Choli, which is in the typical Western Indian style and could certainly not have developed in the hill areas, also points to a strong Western Indian or Rajasthani influence. The motifs are also from the plains. Peacocks and elephants which are commonly used in the embroidery are not at all common in the hill areas.

One of the commonest themes in the Rumals worked in folk style is the Ras Lila, where Krishna is shown dancing with Gopis. This forms the central pattern of the Rupal. The simplified drawing of the figures has a curious form. A simple cone forms the body. Uplifted arms are fixed to the top of the cone and a face which is half-human and half-bird gives a peculiar primitive quality to the over-all composition. The four outer sides are confined by a border of a flowing undulating creeper. The remaining surface creates an alive and rich background. The auspicious banana tree stands next to a flowering bush. An elephant, with his body made out of a black rectangle, appears to move across the surface staidly, holding a lotus in his trunk. A horse drawn by a bold semi-circular stroke, with an uplifted tail drawn on one side and a head on the other conveys the prancing stance. The colours are also vivid and in bold contrasts. The Krishna figure is deep blue with orange scarf and crimson feet. The gopis are worked in vivid purple combined with lemon yellow and sap green, or bright Indian pink combined with chrome yellow, and crimson. The foliage is in vivid greens with flowers and fruits picked up in brilliant colours. The stylized animals and birds acquire a different dimension with the use of colours.

A historical piece which combined both styles, the folk and classical, is in the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This is a long rectangular piece showing the battle of Kurukshetra; it was presented by Raj Gopal Singh to the British during early 19th century and had been in the possession of House of Chamba from the end of the 18th century. The depiction of the battle scenes is powerfully handled with the two armies confronting each other. One can hear the din of the battle, sword beating against the sword, arrows whirring by, the 'Dhvajas' fluttering in the wind and the horses racing for the charge. Surrounding the battle are the black ill-omened crows waiting to get their pickings.

According to tradition maintained in an old Gurdwara in Gurdaspur District, which keeps some of the relics of Guru Nanak Devji, a beautifully embroidered handkerchief is preserved in the shrine as embroidered by Bebo Nanki, the sister of Guru Nanakji, which would mean that the Rupal was embroidered in the 16th century.

The National Museum has an excellent rectangular Rupal carrying ten scenes of Nayak, Nayika Bheda.



1. The function of all arts among the folk was established. The embroidered cloth was given in dowry on weddings. The women folk all learnt embroidering as a natural habit in the community. In the afternoons they sat together, gossiped and wove the coloured threads on background cloth with deft hands. The nimble fingers of the communities of Himachal have thus established the world fame of the embroidered Rumal. The simple women seem to

have known the secret of design. This Rumal is a masterly painting in colour threads. (Collection: Buri Singh Museum; Photo: D. H. Sahiar)

2. The detail of the previous large rumal shows modelling. The imitation of the miniature style is obvious, though in thread the fingers assume a primitivist vitality.

It depicts Radha as Svadhin-patika, for she has Krishna at her feet, and Vasakasajja Nayika—who stands looking out in the moonlight alone by the side of the empty bed, waiting for the lover's return. Another scene shows Utka-Nayika, the girl who has crept away to the forest, prepares a bed of leaves, as she waits for her beloved, fearful of the dangers of the night. The overhanging branches of the tree, the drooping leaves of the banana tree reflect her despondency. The Abhisarika Nayika is shown going through the dark to the tryst, as the clouds gather in the background.

The flowing rhythmical line and the simple unaffected naturalism of the scenes are reminiscent of the treatment of Nayika Bheda in Pahari miniatures, even though the overall design has been greatly simplified.

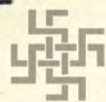
There is a curious mingling of influences between the folk embroideries and the more stylized court embroidery. The use of Sarhu (Cypress) in the folk embroidery is derived from the influence of the Pahari paintings which, in turn, were influenced by the Mughal miniatures. The border of an undulating creeper of a flowering lotus and

serrated leaves is folk in character, yet it is used in all the Rumals.

Another interesting form of embroidery of the hill areas based on the same traditions are the Dhvajas used in the temple. These embroidered banners carry bold delineations of Hanuman, Surya and Chandrama. Rich embroidery is prepared on them with the use of vivid contrasts in colour. Similar in style are the embroidered hangings meant to be hung at the back of the votive images in temples. They generally carry religious themes—Vishnu reclining on the Shesha, with Lakshmi seated at his feet as Brahma emerges out of the navel, the Dasavatar, ten incarnations of Vishnu, and Shiva in his different forms. The compositions are simple and the drawing of the figures is forceful.

Himachal Pradesh has a rich variety of embroideries which vary in styles. They are essentially pictorial in character and use the satin stitch combined with the stem-stitch, the most effective technique for this particular style of embroidery.







3. A square rumal depicting 'Krishna Lila'. The central motif is of Shri Krishna as Vishnu seated on the lotus holding different emblems in his four hands. Krishna and the gopis dance around, holding hands, along with a lotus flower from which the universe flows. The bent knees of Krishna figure and the movement of the heads of the gopis thrust the movement outwards. Flowering bushes and an undulated border enclose the rumal, carrying the rhythm of the 'Ras Leela' over the entire surface. The composition which suggests the free movement of circular dance of many Krishnas and many Radhas quivers with the colour combinations which the instinctive genius has rendered forth through sheer expression and patient, insistent work. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. Photo: D. H. Sahiar).
4. A historical piece showing the battle of Kurukshetra. The battle scene, with the two armies confronting each other, is powerfully handled. We can hear the din of the battle, sword beating against sword, arrows whirring by, and horses rushing to the charge. Surrounding the battle scene are the ill-omened crows. (Collection: Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Photo: Jasleen Dhamija).





5. A rectangular Chamba rumal depicting the Dasavars of Vishnu. The composition is worked in soft muted colours. (Collection: Jasleen Dhamija. Photo: Ram Dhamija).

6. The lovely Ras Leela design in the middle of the cube shows that the secret of putting circles in squares had become embedded in the folk biology. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum. Photo: D. H. Sahiar).

7. The hunt scene rendered from hearsay imbibes vitality from the fables heard. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. Photo: D. H. Sahiar).

8. 9. The choli pieces for the full breasts of the bride were to heighten her body with the mirrors woven in the embroidery. This may have come from Saurashtra as the mirror work tradition in clothes is not indigenous to the Pahari area. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. Photo: D. H. Sahiar).



9



JEWELLERY

Wearing of jewellery was not only confined to women, men also wore jewellery and continue to do so in the rural areas. The Sarpench decorated the turban; Kantha made up of gold beads was worn around the neck; a longer necklace 'Nama' with a heavy pendent was also used by men. In many of the remote hill areas, men wear a necklace, an ear-ring, and a bangle, their cap or turban is adorned with flowers and feathers. The women, of course, wear jewellery profusely and during the festivals or marriages they bring out all their jewellery and deck themselves with it from head to toe. For the women, jewellery is their wealth, their social security and a sign of 'Sohag' (married bliss). She will never be parted from it. It is only in death that she is denuded of her jewellery. A dying person is stripped of jewellery—a widow is denuded of all her jewels at the death of her husband, this marks the end of her joy and a negation of life itself.

Adorning the person with jewellery starts from the birth of the child. Babies are adorned with delicate jewellery—tiny little bracelets and anklets of chains with bells, amulets to protect the child and a black thread with gold or silver beads round the waist are commonly worn by little children all over India.

Sometimes when the family has lost an infant, they pierce the nose of the male child and put a ring in it so that cruel nature should be misled into thinking that it is a girl child.

When the child is a little older, there is a special ceremony 'Karan Vedha' for piercing the ears. An auspicious time is chosen, a Puja performed and the child's ears are pierced. After this the child is given sweets, and sweets are also distributed to other children and participants in the ceremony.

At the time of marriage, the bride is presented with jewellery from the bridegroom's family as well as from her own. This is her wealth—'Stri Dhan'.

In Kangra, Kulu, Simla Hills, Bilaspur and Nahan, jewellery is prepared by 'Sonars' who are hereditary jewellers. In Kinnaur, they are known as 'Domangs' who work in brass, copper, silver and gold. In Lahul, they are known as 'Gareng'. They are essentially blacksmiths who work in iron, brass, silver and gold. In Spiti they are known as 'Garh' or 'Zo'.

Speciality of different areas

Jewellery of Himalayan areas has one thing in common that it is concentrated on the head and the neck. In other parts of India, jewellery is distributed all over the body. Anklets, arm ornaments and the waist ornaments are elaborate and heavy. Quite often the anklets go up from the ankles to nearly half way up the calf. The arm is also covered barely leaving elbow space. In the mountains

when the hill women have to move up and down the mountains and also wear heavy clothes which cover their body, the concentration of jewellery is on the head where it is visible as well as where the weight can be easily carried.

The head ornament commonly worn all over Himachal Pradesh are the 'Chak' or 'Chaunk' as it is called in Chamba. This is a dome-like ornament worn on the top of the head and is generally engraved with intricate motifs. Sometimes it is even enamelled. On the sides are two smaller "Chaunkphul" connected with a chain and plaited into the hair. Sometimes the two smaller hair ornaments are made in the form of lotus flowers, these are known as 'Shishuphul'.

The ornaments for the forehead are the 'Shringarpatti' also known as 'Chiri' or 'Dora' and 'Teeka'. The 'Shringarpatti' has a central pendent either in the form of a half moon, a full moon, or a lotus flower with Ghungroos, or 'Pipal' leaves suspended from it. This rests on the centre of the forehead. Two linked chains enclose linked geometrical pieces known as 'Chandaka'. One side of the chain is decorated with 'Pipal' leaves suspended from it. The 'Patti' falls on both sides, framing the face. These either end in hooks which are fixed to the hair on the side or in a 'Karan Phul' Jhumka worn in the lobe of the ear.

The 'Mangtika' is a circular pendent suspended from a chain and worn in the centre of the forehead with the chain hooked into the hair.

'Jutti' or 'Junti' is a hair ornament of silver with hollow cylindrical forms ending in pendants decorated with Ghungroos which is worn at the end of the plaits. This is most popular in Kinnaur, Mahasu and Sirmur area.

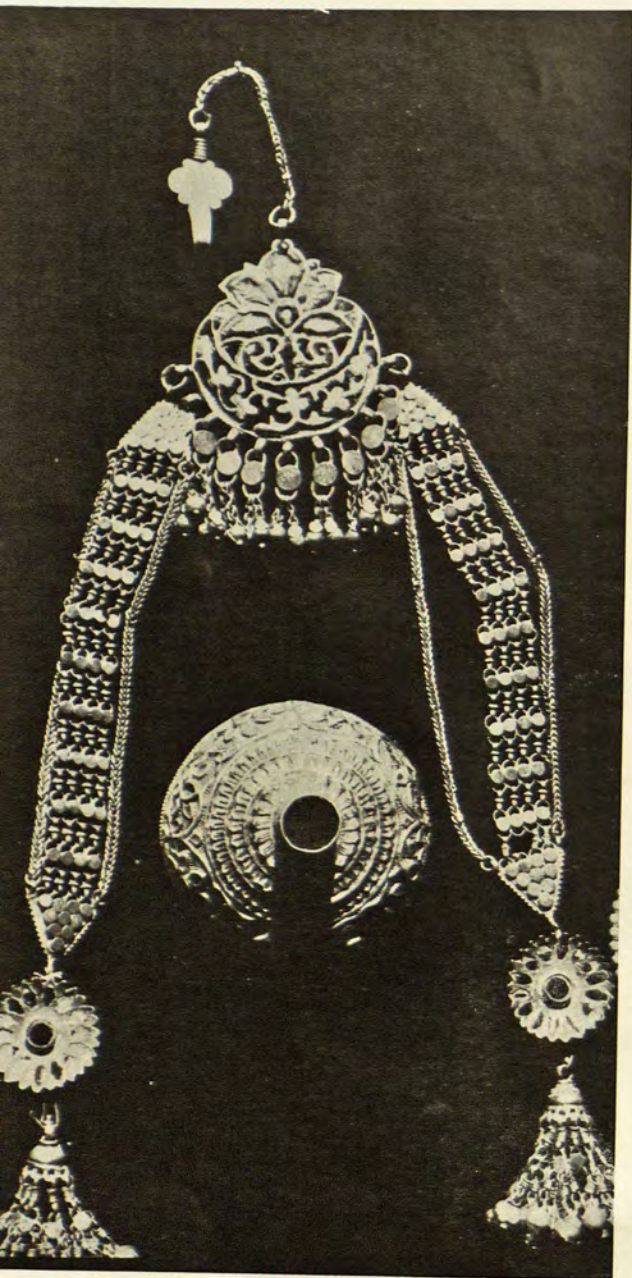
Amongst the ear ornaments, beside the 'Karanphul Jhumka' there are the Bale, Bragar, Bunde, Dandi, Darotu, Gol, Mungri, Murki and Dilli. The Karanphul Jhumka is worn all over India and is a full-blown flower with a half-open bud with 'Ghungroos' suspended from it. The Bale or Phair is a crescent-shaped ear-ring with Ghungroos suspended from it which is worn on the top of the ear, when made in a small size or at the lobe of the ear by Gujjar women.

Bragar is another interesting ear-ring, circular in shape with turquoise and pearls. This is used generally in Chamba and Mahasu.

Darotu is an interesting form of ear-ring built up by a spiral of a single wire. It is worn at the lobe of the ear and is used only in Mahasu.

Balu, Bulak, Karolu, Nath are common nose ornaments. Balu is a large nose-ring of gold, quite often six inches in diameter, decorated with floral forms made up by studding them with stones. It also has a pendent. The heavy Bulak is kept in place with a chain hooked into the hair. This is commonly used by the women in Mandi, Kalu, Mahasu and Kinnaur.

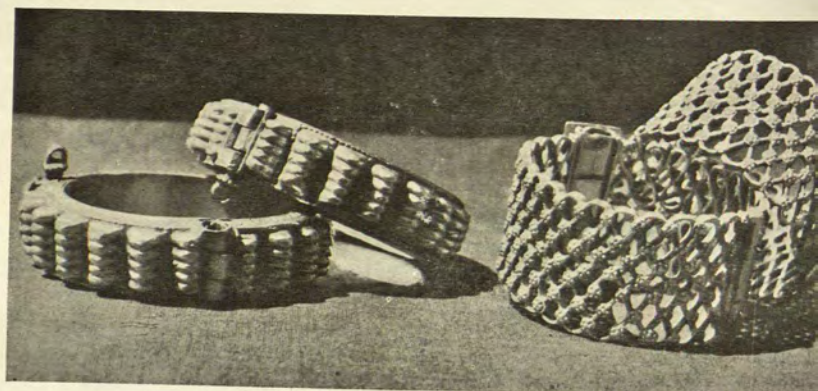




3



4



Murki is a beautiful gold nose-ring suspended from the Central wall of the nose. It is built up with the use of granulating method.

The Laung worn by Gaddi women is circular half sphere with decoration worked with granulating method and a red stone in the Centre.

Ornaments for upper arms are rare. They are 'Anant', 'Jantar' and 'Saptami', which are generally associated with religious observations.

Wrist ornaments are popular. They are 'Bund', 'Paribund', 'Chura', 'Gajroo', 'Kangnu' and 'Toke'. 'Chura' is cylindrical in form which extends from the wrist to the fore-arm and carries simple geometrical motifs. 'Toke' is a thick bangle with geometrical designs. They are popular in Chamba district.

'Kangnu' or 'Dhaglu' are thick heavy round bracelets which generally end with the stylized heads of tigers confronting each other.

'Gajroo' is a hollow bracelet which along with 'Ghari Churi', which is a flat engraved bangle are the lightest bangles weighing approximately 25 to 35 grams per pair as against the other heavy bracelets, which generally vary from 80 to even 400 grams.

Most women have series of necklaces, starting from a collar of beads or silver plaques held together by cotton threads and worn close to the neck. In Kinnaur, it is known as 'Pat Kachong' and in the other areas as Kach or Kachong.

'Hamel' is another necklace made up of coins strung on a thread and having a heavy central pendent. This is commonly used by Gujjar women. In Chamba area 'Dhod Mala', hollow beads shaped like a pumpkin are popular in place of the Hamel.

The 'Chandra Har' or 'Satlara Har' is a seven-stringed necklace of chains made up of circular flower-like forms. Sometimes these chains are combined with large enamelled work pendants carrying the delineation of Devi on the tiger on the central pendent with floral motifs on the two side pendants.

The 'Hansli' is used but mostly by the Gujjars and also by the lower caste people.

Pangi and Churah

The women wear a round embroidered cap with a tail which goes down their back. The 'Joji' is tilted to the side of the head coquettishly. A linked chain fringed with globular silver beads and delicately worked 'pipal' leaves which is known as 'Shangli' is attached to the Joji and fastened to the hair above the ears on one side. A moon-like pendent with beads suspended from it is sometimes worn suspended from the cap. The sides of the ears have small rings. Heavy large round rings or studs with long chains are worn in the lobe of the ear. In the neck

1. *The function of jewellery, from the beads and bangles of the primitive woman to the gold and silver enamel compositions of women through the later centuries, is to heighten the beauty of the beloved in the eyes of the beholder. As flowers set free joy in the hearts of men and women, the motifs of much jewellery have been drawn from the garden. The coloured stones, the beaten gold, and the pearls, are all knit together in various lovely decorations to dazzle against the natural face and draw the human pair, by invisible strings of desire, to the delight of union. A woman from Kulu wearing her 'mangtika' worked in enamel with cup-shaped pipal leaf suspended from it. In her nose she wears a large 'balu' with a pendant studded with stones. (Photo by P. N. Mago)*
2. *The design for the champakali necklace is popularly worn by mature women. The star-shaped ear-rings and the bigger star for the forehead go with the champakali necklace. The silver buttons for the tunic are uniform wear. (Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba. Photo D. H. Sahiar)*
3. *The mountain-peak chowk, the Sikhara or the top of the head, has gone out of wear except in remote villages—though the flower garland for the hair, and big ear-rings, continue to be worn.*
4. *The five-layer silver bead necklace is modelled on the ancient beads worn in the nomadic society. The same bead motif is carried out in the earrings and the head piece.*
5. *The ring circles, which make the Bazubandh, trace their ancestry to more than a thousand year ago, while the knuckle-duster heavy Bazubandh derives from a weapon worn by women against invaders in the feudal period.*
6. *The bangles of horse hair are a speciality manufactured in the hills. Only one of craftsman remains in Chamba, who is a master of this style of bangle making today. The two pieces made of cowries and shells are museum pieces not popularly worn any longer.*

(Collection: Bhuri Singh Museum. Photo: D. H. Sahiar)

the women wear a close fitting necklace like a 'Choker' made up of silver beads or glass beads, or a series of necklaces varying in size, starting from necklaces of glass beads or shells round the neck to silver chains or pendants and coins strung on cotton threads. These series of necklaces quite often go down to the waist.

A number of brass beads are also worn. A peculiar pattern worn by the older generation of women is of a small hollow Pomegranates of brass at the end of the necklace. This contains a metal pea inside and makes a tinkling sound. They wear silver pins to hold their shawl or dress together and sometimes these are connected by a chain which hangs over the breasts. On the arm, only one thick bracelet will be worn at the wrist generally in the form of a 'Karadh' with the stylized mouth of a lion. They are fond of wearing rings and quite often they may have silver rings covering all their fingers.

Spiti and Lahul

Amongst the women of Spiti, the most important jewellery is the 'Perak'. This comprises a red coloured material which starts from the top of the head and tapers down to the waist ending in a tassel. The 'Perak' is studded with turquoises of different shapes and sizes.

In the front of the 'Perak' is worn a fan-shaped ornament which can be of gold, silver or brass. This hangs over the forehead. On each side of the face, two long ornamental tassels hang down, framing the face. A girl is not able to get married unless she has a 'Perak' to wear. Besides this they wear a series of necklaces.

The important ornaments worn by the Lahuli women are *Kirkitsi*, a cup-shaped ornament with two clips. This is worn at the top of the head. It is generally decorated with turquoises. *Along* are earrings. *Dunkertsu* is a finely engraved piece which is worn in the hair and hangs at the back. Attached to this are long chains with stones and *ghungroos*. This is known as *Pholunu*.

Sham sham is another ornament which is worn on the dress and amidst the pendants and *ghungroos* hang specially shaped pieces for cleaning ears, a tooth-pick etc. *Kerag* is the waist belt which is very decorative and has a silver purse attached to it known as *Shub*.

The Lahuli women also have an ornament similar to the *Perak*. This is a cloth cap with red cloth having zari embroidery. It also has stones and silver ornament stitched to it and chains linked with pendants in the form of sun and moon suspended over the forehead. This is known as *Yutod*.

The men are also fond of jewellery. They wear a necklace of amber beads and have a beautifully worked silver spoon which, while not in use, is tacked on to the dress and proudly displayed. In their belt, they will tuck in an iron pipe of excellent workmanship, the work of Spitian blacksmiths—and also suspend from their belt a decorated tinder purse.

Kulu and Kangra

The women of Kulu wear some of the most exquisite jewellery during festivals or at marriages. Here the jewellery is essentially of silver with only the 'Nath' worked in gold.

For decorating the head, they wear a 'Shringar Patti' which has a broad strip of delicately worked chains with silver 'Ghungru', round balls, and Pipal leaves, suspended from one side like a fringe. This frames the face, with the fringe softening the lines of the face and reflecting light. The Patti ends in the *Jhumka* which is in the form of a flower and has either a bunch of *Ghungroos* hanging from it or has a half-opened bud. The upper part of the ear has rings of silver with chains. They also wear a 'Chak'—a dome-like ornament worn at the top of the head with two small 'Chakphul' on the side.

Close to the neck, they wear either a collar made of glass beads or of silver beads. From this are suspended a series of necklaces quite often worked in enamel. Enamel work was brought from Kangra and Jagat Sukh. The necklace with three to five pendants linked by chains generally carry bold patterns of Devi on her tiger which are worked in blue and green enamel.

Kinnaur

The jewellery of Kinnaur has Central Asian and North Indian influence, thus making a distinctive combination. The women are really covered with jewellery from head to foot starting with 'Chak', a flat disc work at the back of the head with chains going over the cap. The 'Zutti', a silver hair pendent, made up of silver beads, leaves, stones and corals, 'Moolu' or 'Mulmento' which is a pair of ornaments made up of strings of light silver leaves, hanging in clusters from an enamel worked triangular plaque. The plaque is attached to the hair and the silver Pipal leaves cascade down the hair onto the breasts framing the face of the wearer. Often the 'Shringar Patti' is also combined with this, thus practically covering the face.

Besides this, they have the 'Khul Kantain' which are several pairs of ear-rings tied to a strap of cloth. These are not worn in the ears but are suspended from the hair.

In the nose, they wear a 'Loung' or a large nose ring for festive occasions.

They wear a series of necklaces starting with the 'Patkachong' worn next to the necklace. Another smaller necklace is the 'Trimani', which is circular, with three gold beads in the centre. Series of necklaces made up of amulet boxes made either in rectangular, lozenge or oval shapes and decorated with floral designs, or with the lucky signs, are strung with beads of silver, corals or other semiprecious stones. The style of jewellery is very similar to that of Lahul, Spiti and Ladakh, yet retaining its regional peculiarities.

POTTERY



Kangra has been cited by Mr. Baden Powell in his 'Punjab Manufactures' (1872) as one of the places worthy of special mention for their unglazed earthen-ware (Black and Red), though the District Report (1925-26) does not notice it.

The pottery in Kangra is generally red in colour with designs painted in brown and white but almost every potter is making some black pottery along with red and its technique is common to all. The black colour is given a polish by first applying 'Banni' a slip on unbaked pottery. The pottery is then baked in air-tight containers in which are placed small oily pieces of pine wood.

The pottery of Kangra may generally be described as crude, but it certainly has creative appeal as regards its form and surface ornamentation. With incised linear patterns and cut work around the mouth and shoulder of the pots, which is full of character, it gives us an insight into the aesthetic peculiarities of the pottery of this area. Birdwood in his '*Industrial arts of India*' remarked that, 'None of the fancy pottery made in India is equal in beauty of form to the primitive village pottery.' The pottery of Kangra even today holds a testimony to Mr. Birdwood's remarks.

The method of decoration is either (Likkhai), painting by crude brushes with clay or 'Golru' and a very fine powder made out of iron stone (rich in iron oxide), or by incising and cutting the raw pottery for which several small tools are used, out of which a comb-like tool called 'Kangi' and a knife-like tool called 'Sumba' are common.

In some places the pottery used to be ornamented with an amalgam of mercury in pattern. Some Kangra Earthen Vases (first silvered and then covered with a coating of transparent lac colouring over the silver) were sent to an exhibition which was held in Punjab in 1881; but there is no evidence of such work being done nowadays.

If it is desired to make a very large vessel, such as a 'Gharra', it is first thrown on the wheel and then after some time placed in curved-shaped object called 'athri' and beaten and expanded. The workman uses a sort of mallet called 'Thathi' to aid his right hand with which the moulding is done and in his left hand he holds another round mallet called 'Kariru' or 'Kneru' which he uses inside the vessel as it forms up. In the process of this final shaping of the object fine sand is also occasionally



applied on the surface of the vessel to prevent the plastic clay from cracking. Vessels as high as 3 feet used for storing of grains are still commonly made.

The usual varieties of pottery articles made in Kangra are 'Gidya' a kind of lota to contain milk or ghee, 'Patri' a kind of bowl used for curds, butter, etc. or storing dry things, 'Narele', the tobacco smoking pots which are coconut shaped, small or large pottery pieces for putting oil, generally named as 'Talori' or 'Talare' and 'Handee' for boiling milk or cooking dal and vegetables etc. Matkas of different sizes for storage of water or grains and 'Chillams' for their 'Hukkas' are of course the most common objects. Beautiful toys in clay such as horses, sheep and doves for the children are also popularly made and sold at the time of fairs.

The Potters of Kangra have no difficulty about raw materials as the clay found in almost all these villages is of good quality. The other raw materials are cow dung, leaves, branches and bark of the trees. The colouring material they use is 'Banni' which is a kind of hard clay. The method of its preparation consists in breaking it into small pieces and soaking it in cold water and then stirring it after every 2 or 3 hours for about a day. The material is then allowed to settle. The sand etcetera settles at the bottom and the coloured liquid is poured off from the top. This liquid 'Banni' is used as a thin coating on the pots before firing and is applied either by a rag or a country brush.

The 'Kumbhars' or Prajapatis have always been an essential part of the village economy. They catered to the every-day needs of the village community as much as to their special needs at the time of marriage, Sradha or other occasions and events of the village community. They were also responsible for supplying the bricks and clay for the houses of richer people (as in Nurpur).

Most of the potters own small pieces of land in which they have their house, courtyard for oven ('Ava' or 'Aouri') and some space for growing vegetable.

The country being hilly, small villages are more abundant and there are a number of villages where a sufficiently large number of potters are working such as Alampur, Jaisingpur, Barram, Thural, Linjan, Droah, Siddhpur, Lalah, Molug, Dhangeari, Pheri, Sarah, to name only a few

The pottery of Kangra is a living tradition and the pots and matkas with their charming and unique ornamentation still hold a place of pride in our broken inheritance.

** The pottery of Pahari area is generally made of earth, which exudes a subtle perfume when water is put in it. The shapes derive from the most ancient periods and have not varied; nor have the decorations. The carved wooden utensils on the top are modelled on the earthenware.*

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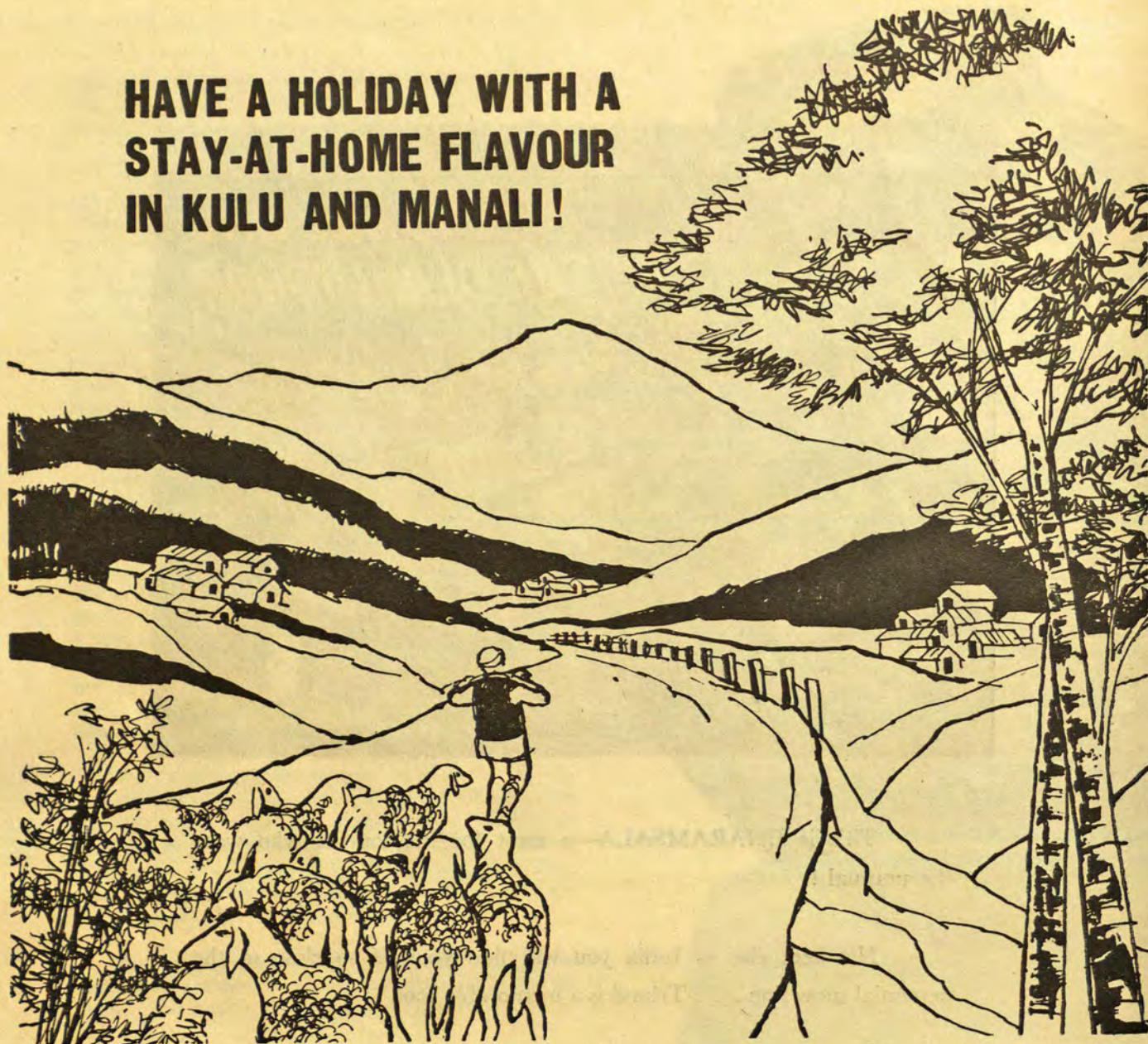
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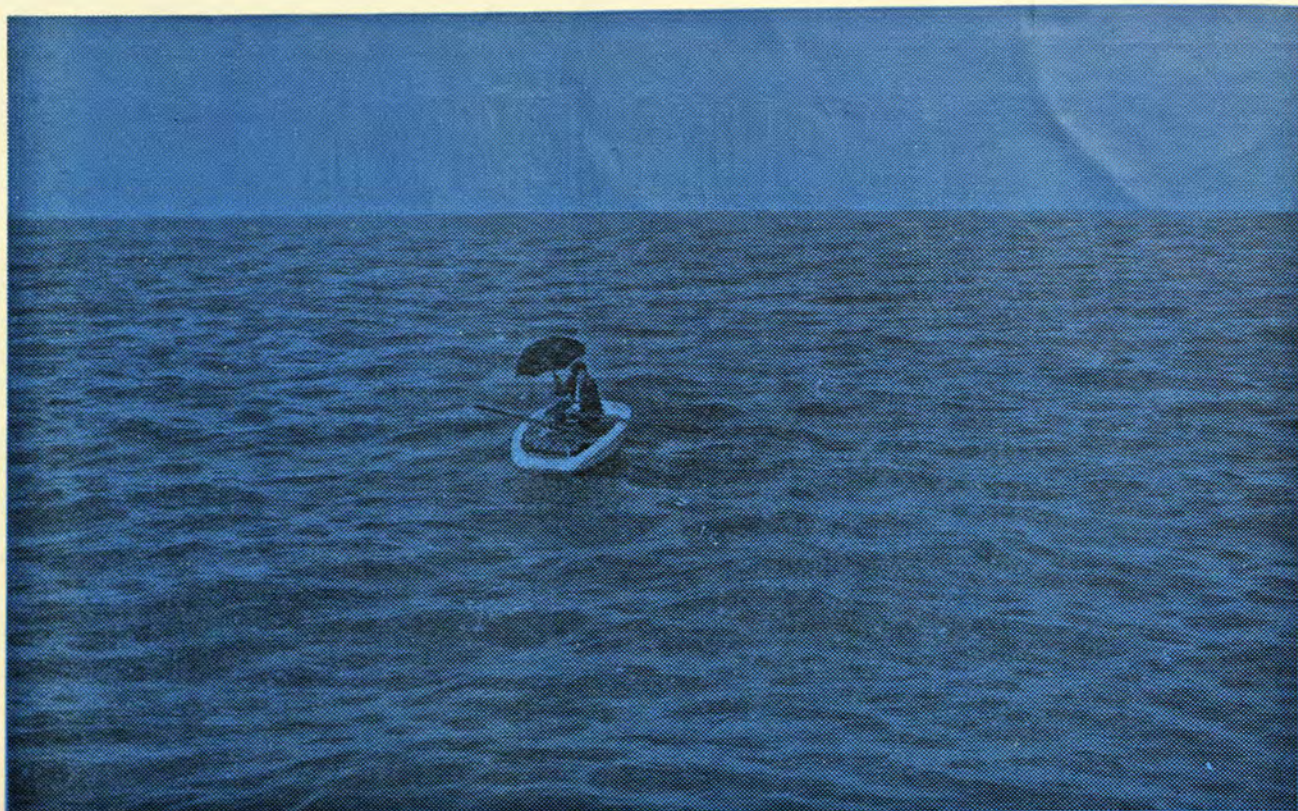


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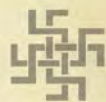
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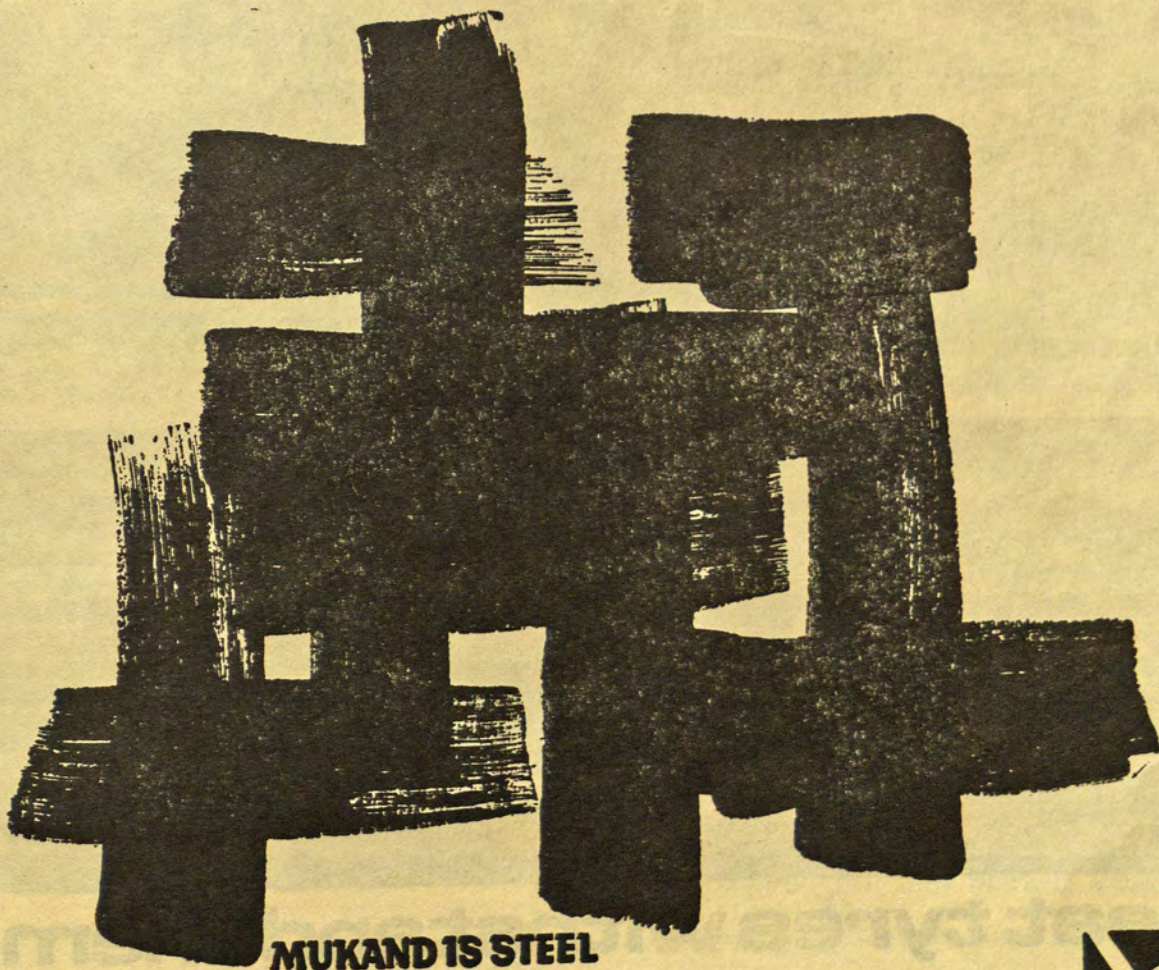


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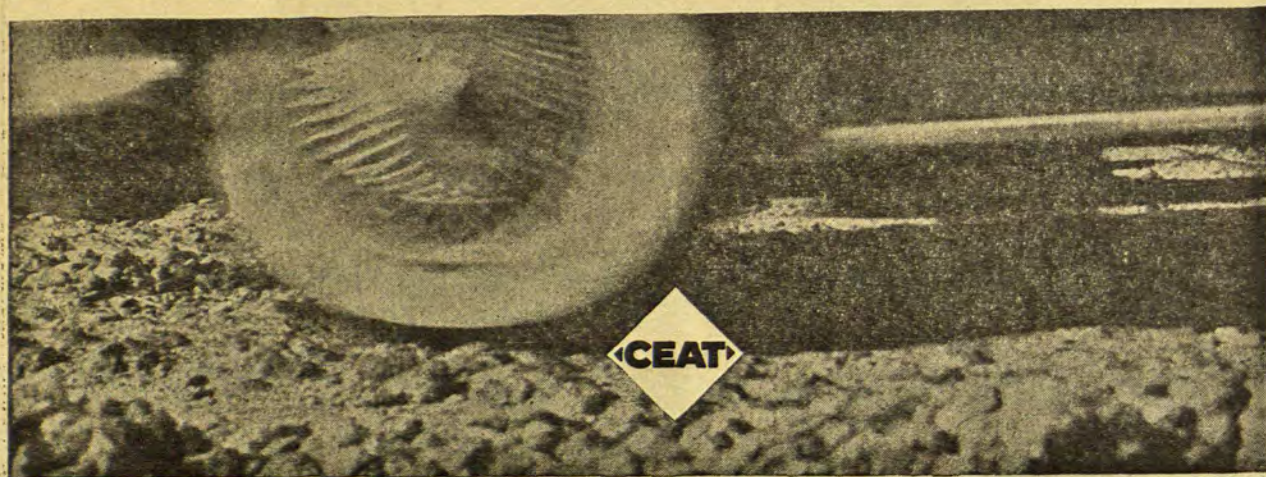
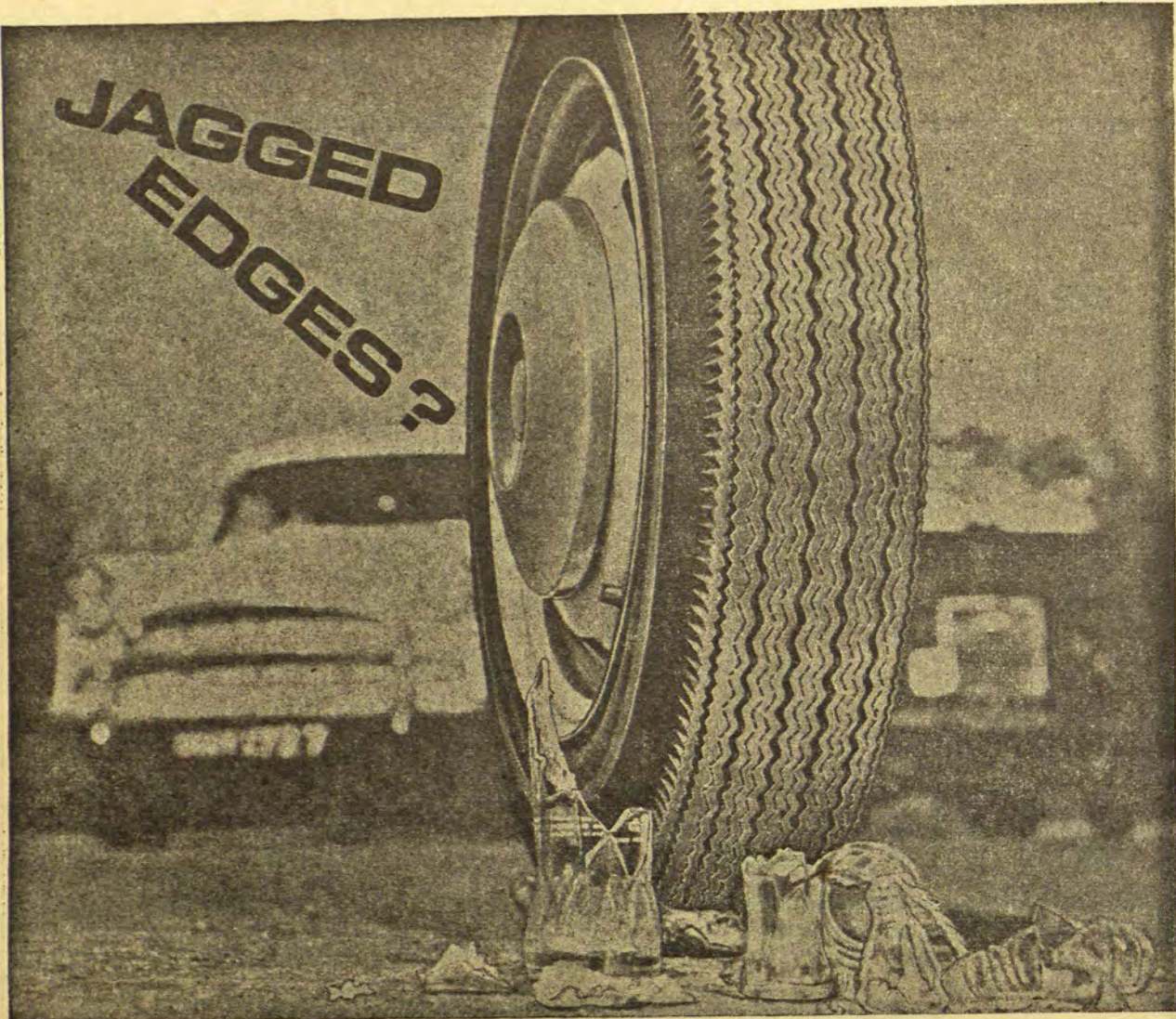
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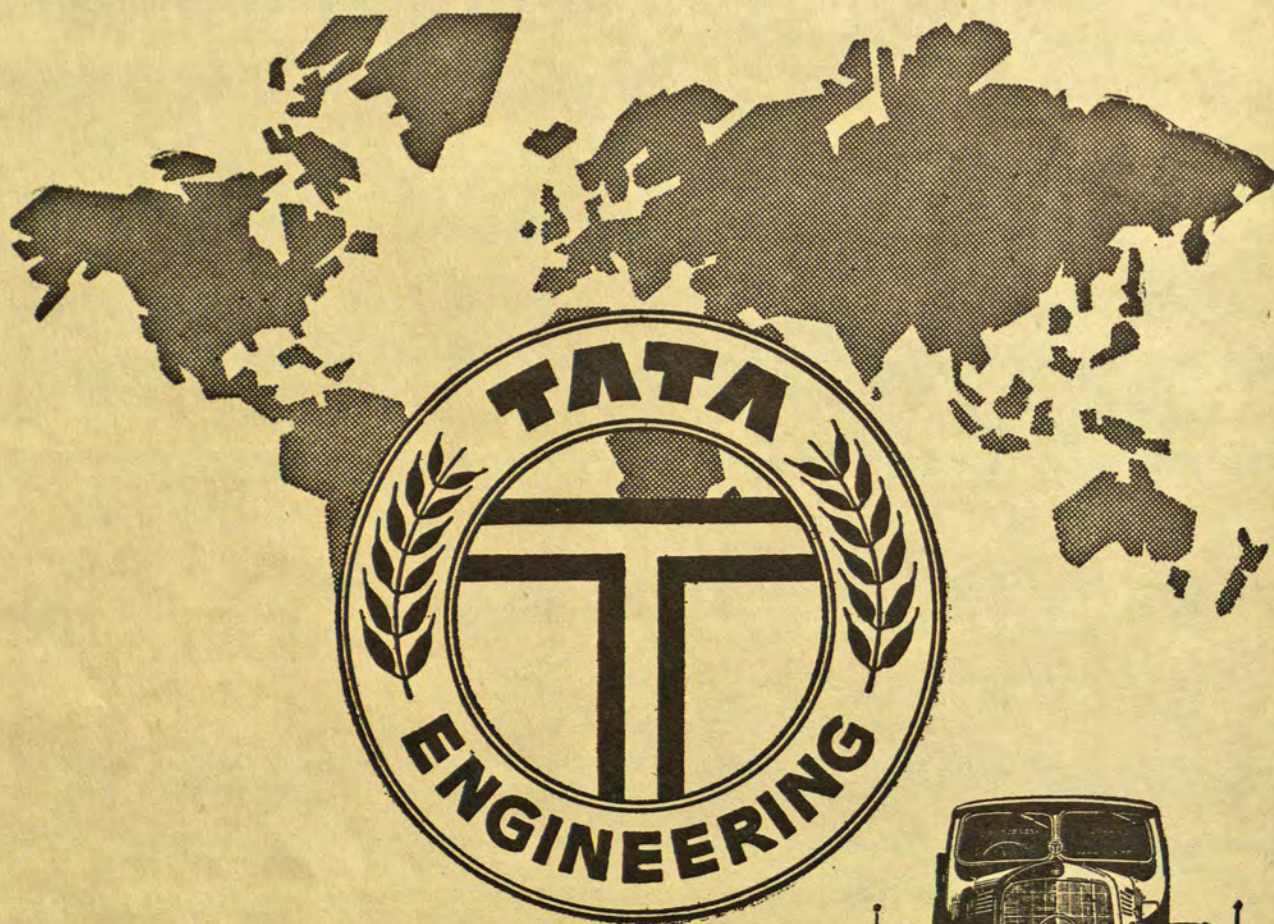
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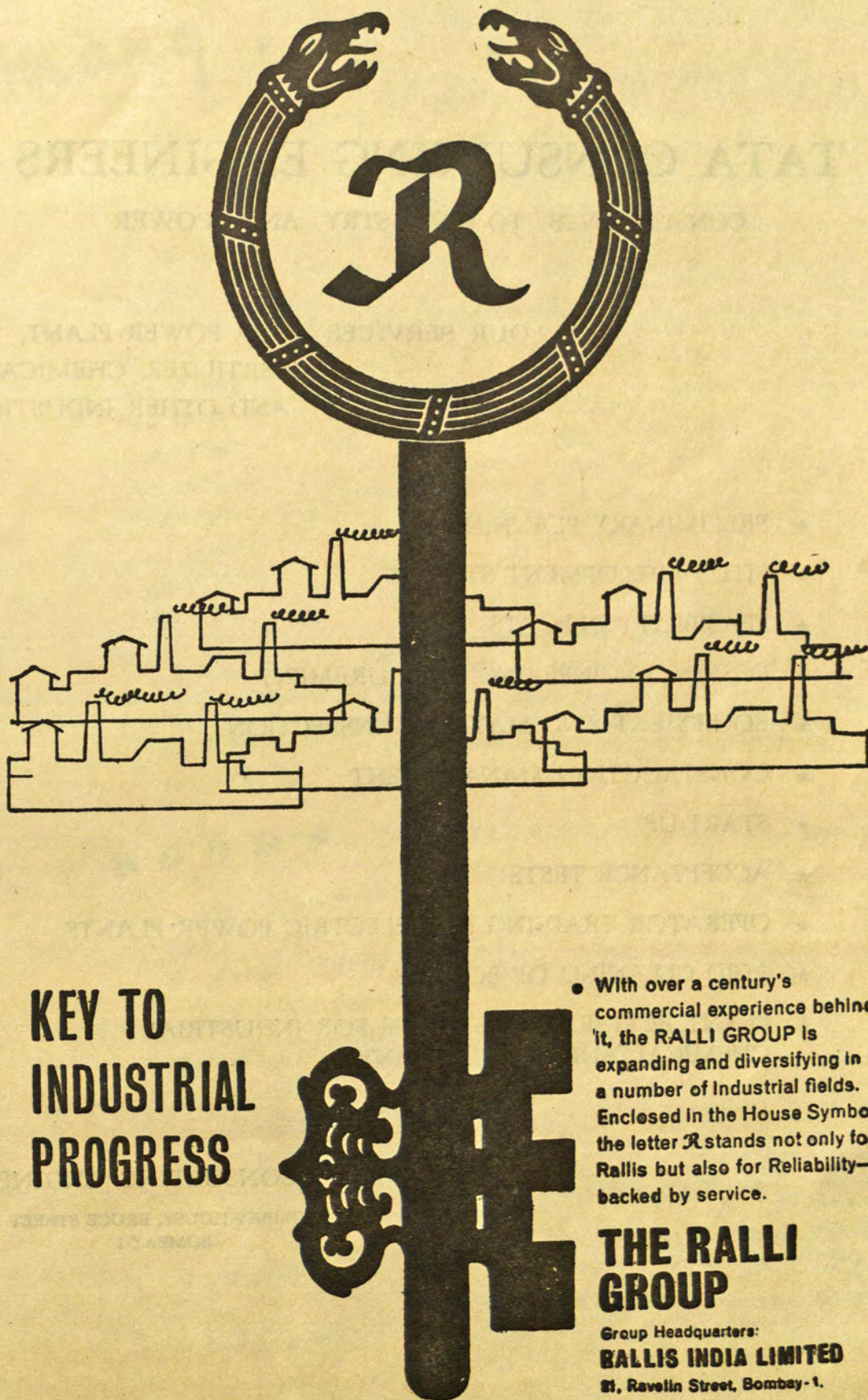
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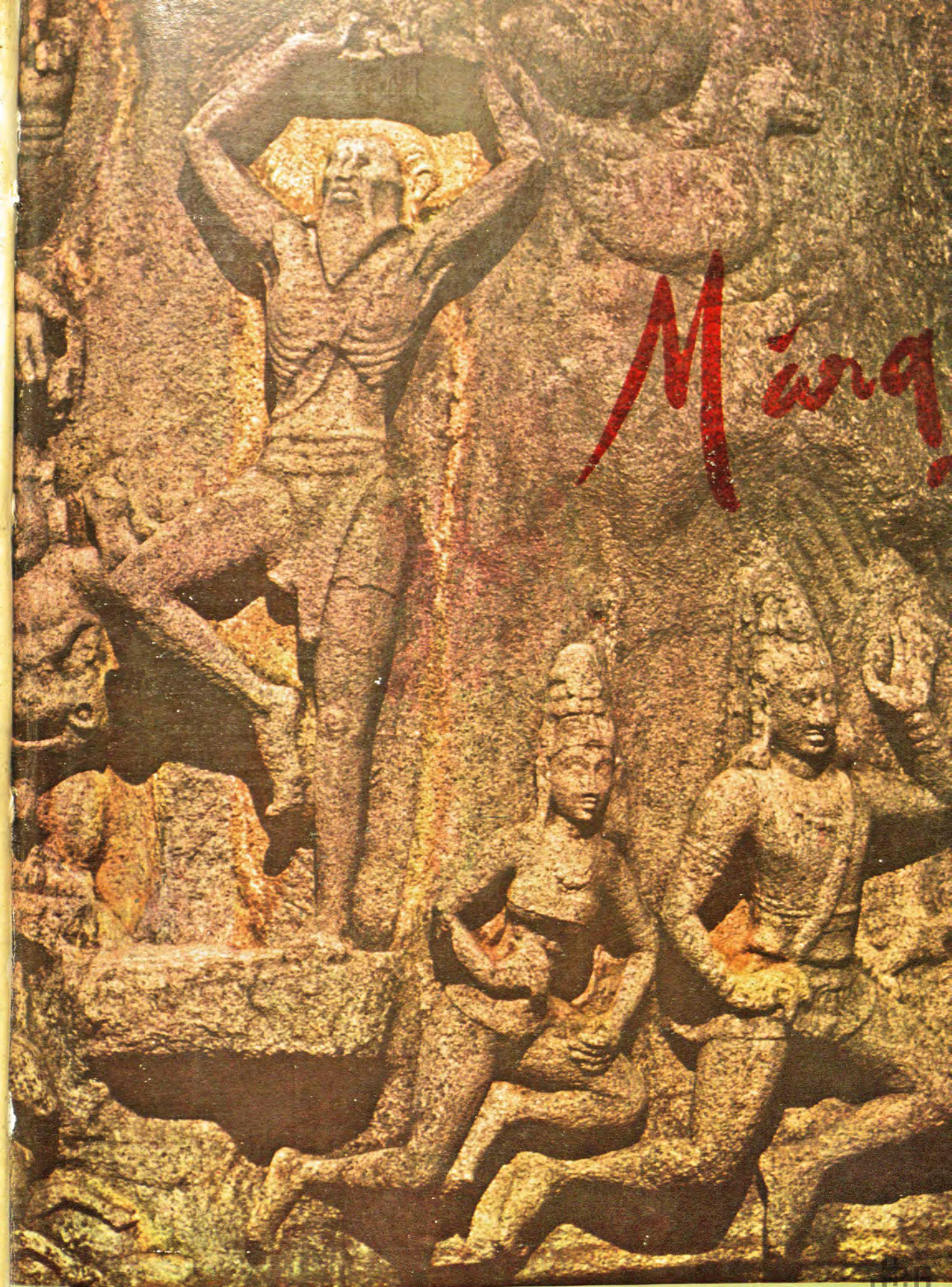
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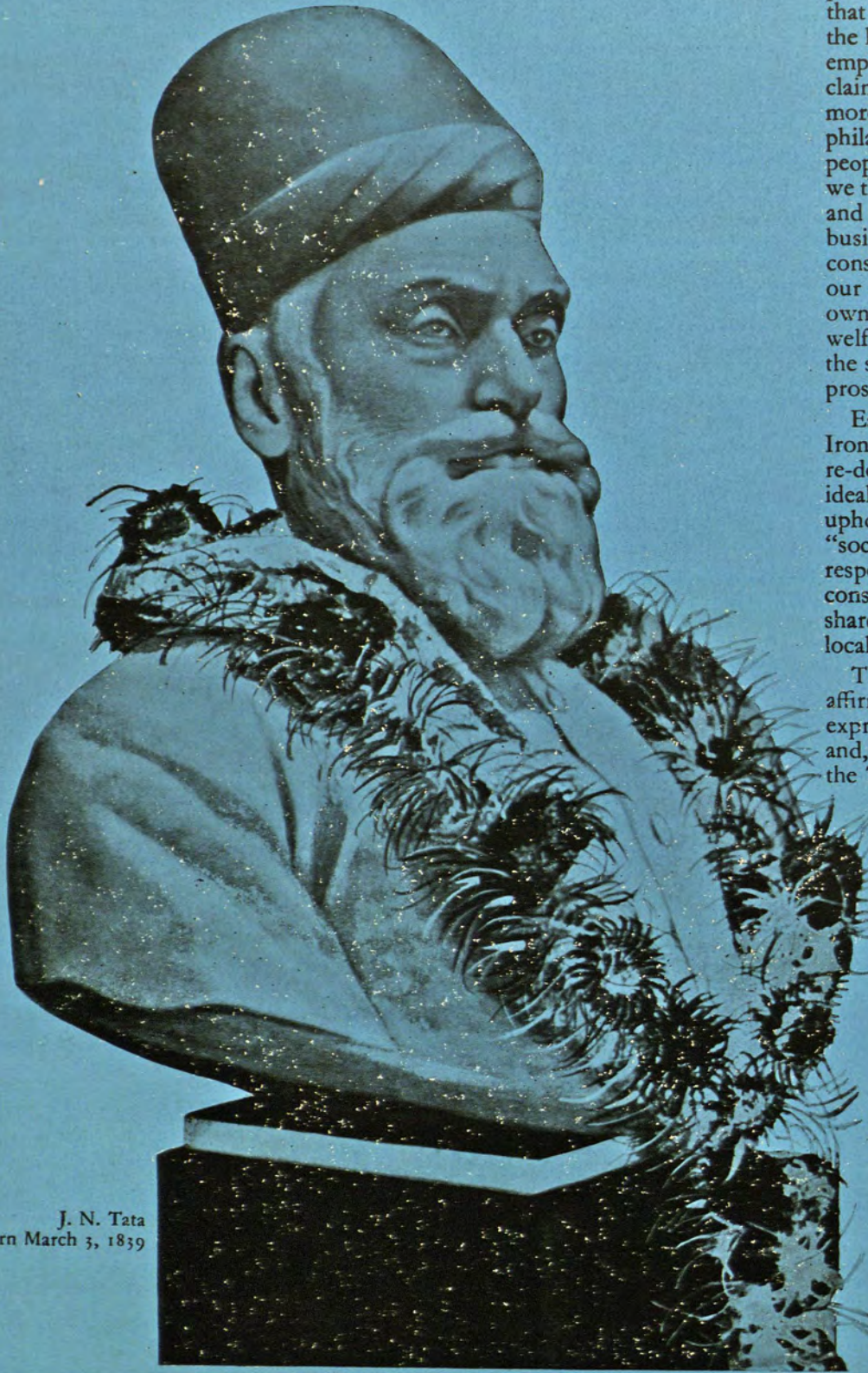
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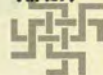
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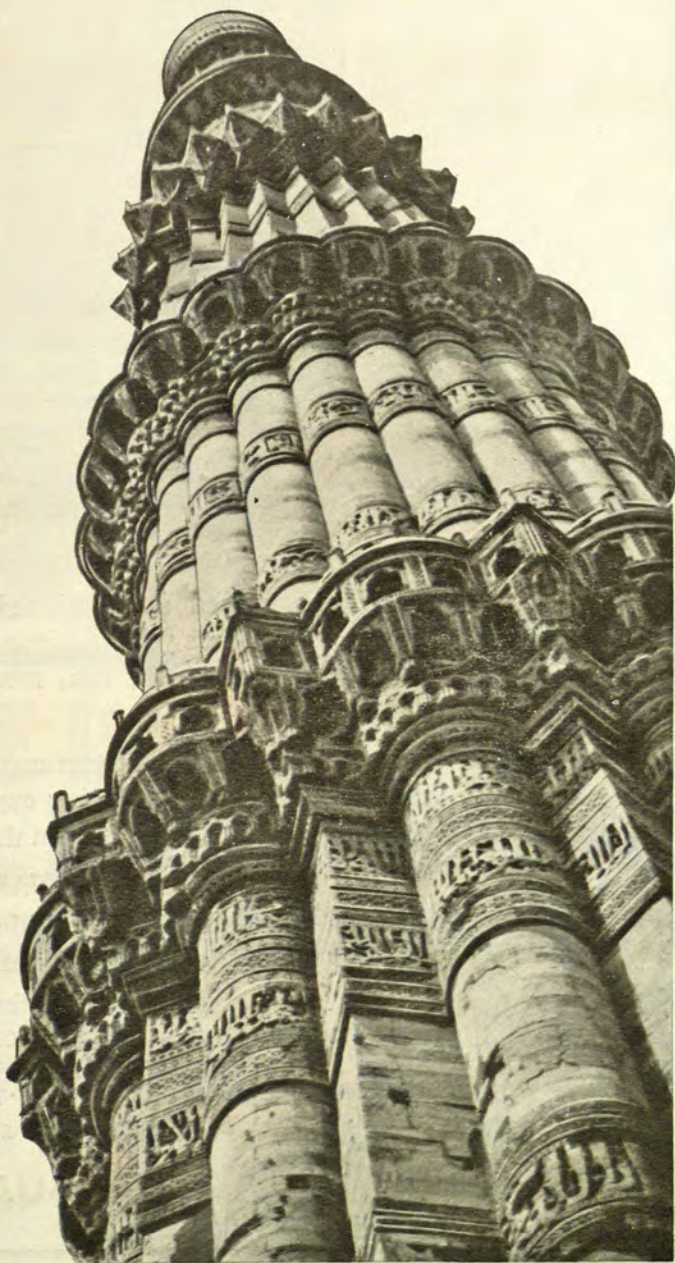
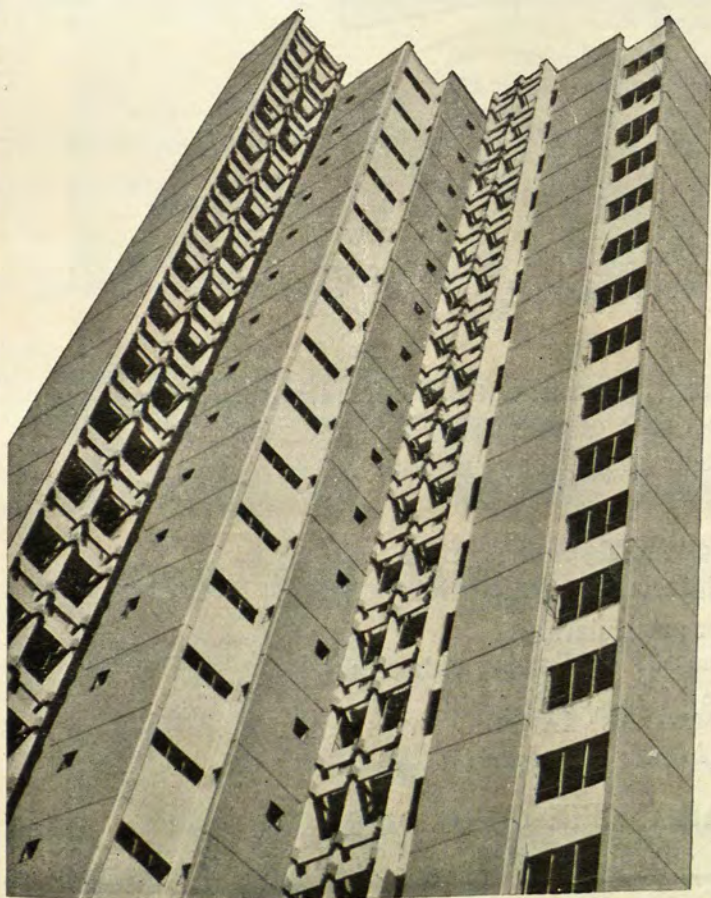
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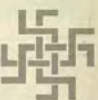
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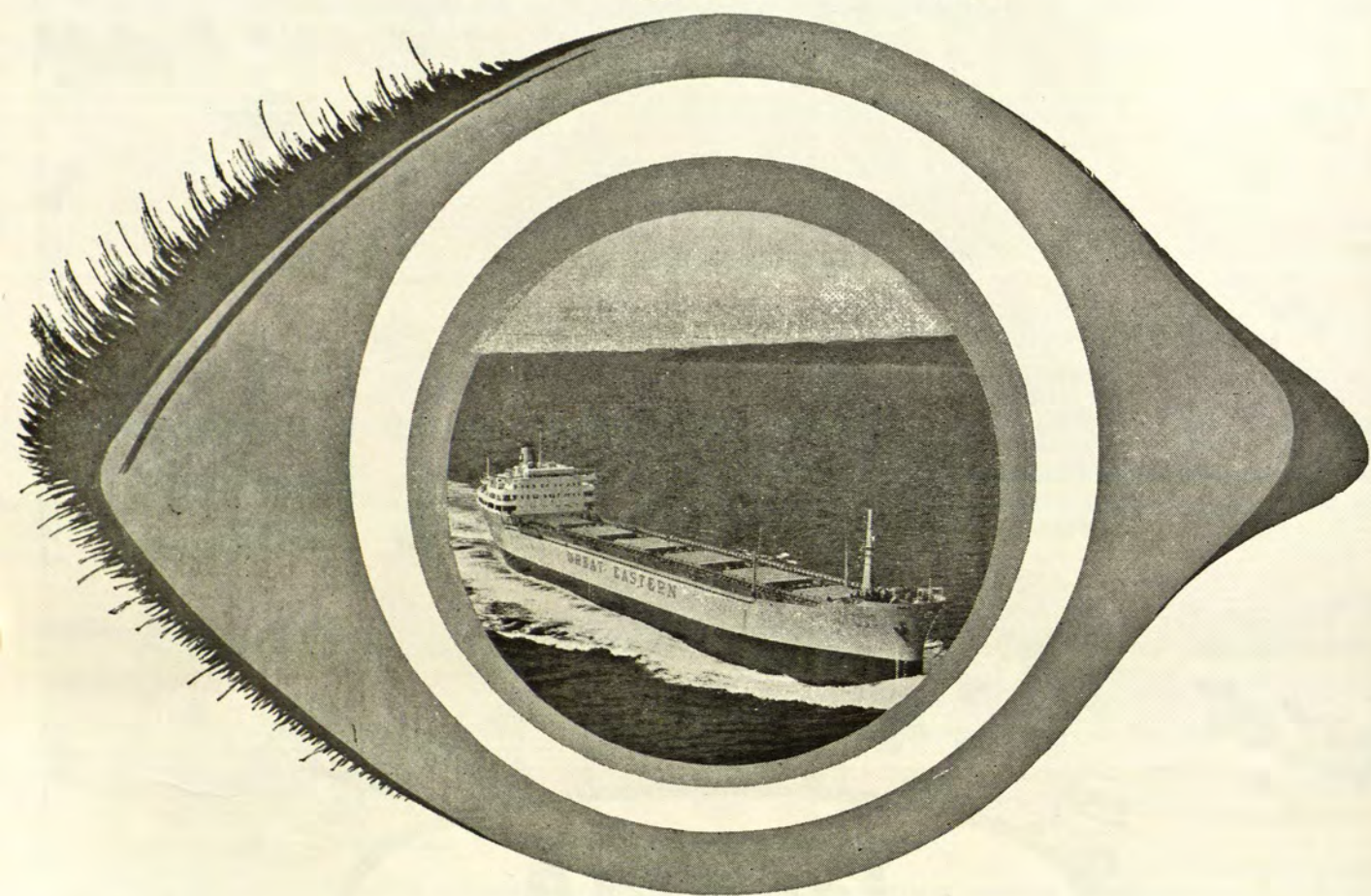
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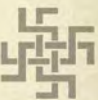
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A Magazine of the Arts

A Tata Enterprise

VOLUME XXIII

JUNE 1970

NUMBER 3

EDITORIAL : HYMN TO MAHABALIPURAM

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| I. THE BALLAD AND THE SOURCE | IV. MAMALLAPURAM |
| II. THE LEGEND OF ARJUNA'S PENANCE | by T. N. Ramachandran |
| III. THE VISION OF THE ROCK AND THE PLASTIC SITUATION OF THE PANELS | 1 Mamallapuram Pallava Rock-cut Architecture |
| by Mulk Raj Anand | 2 Kiratarjuniyam or Arjuna's Penance |

Cover is reproduced from the two colour transparencies of details of the Mahabalipuram rock by Lance Dane.

This number of MARG is in homage to the devoted work of Padmabhushan Shri T. N. Ramachandran in the field of art history. His scholarly text has been divided into two parts: that on the Great Rock is being reproduced in this number, while the Cave Temples, the Rathas and the Shore Temple will come in the next issue of MARG, Volume XXIII, No. 4, September 1970.

The Editor has presented the background of inspiration given by the talented Mahendravarman to this noblest of all South Indian Monuments. The Portfolio analyses the plastic situation of certain important details.

Apart from the photographs supplied by Shri Ramachandran, as from the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Survey, some of the finest pictures have come from Shri R. R. Bharadwaj, Lance Dane and Miss D. H. Sahiar.

The well-known art collector, Shri C. L. Bharany, has generously patronised the back cover of this issue.

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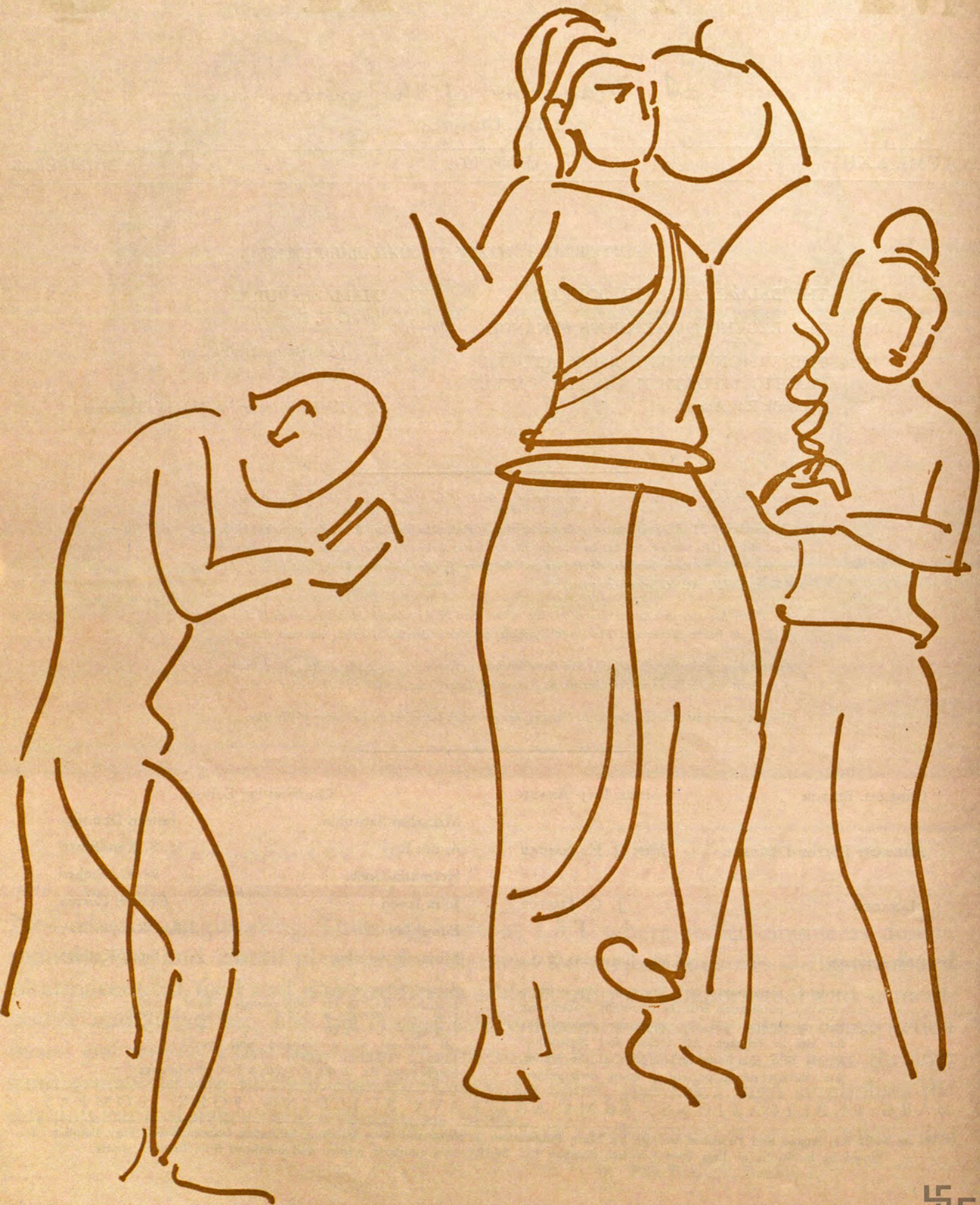
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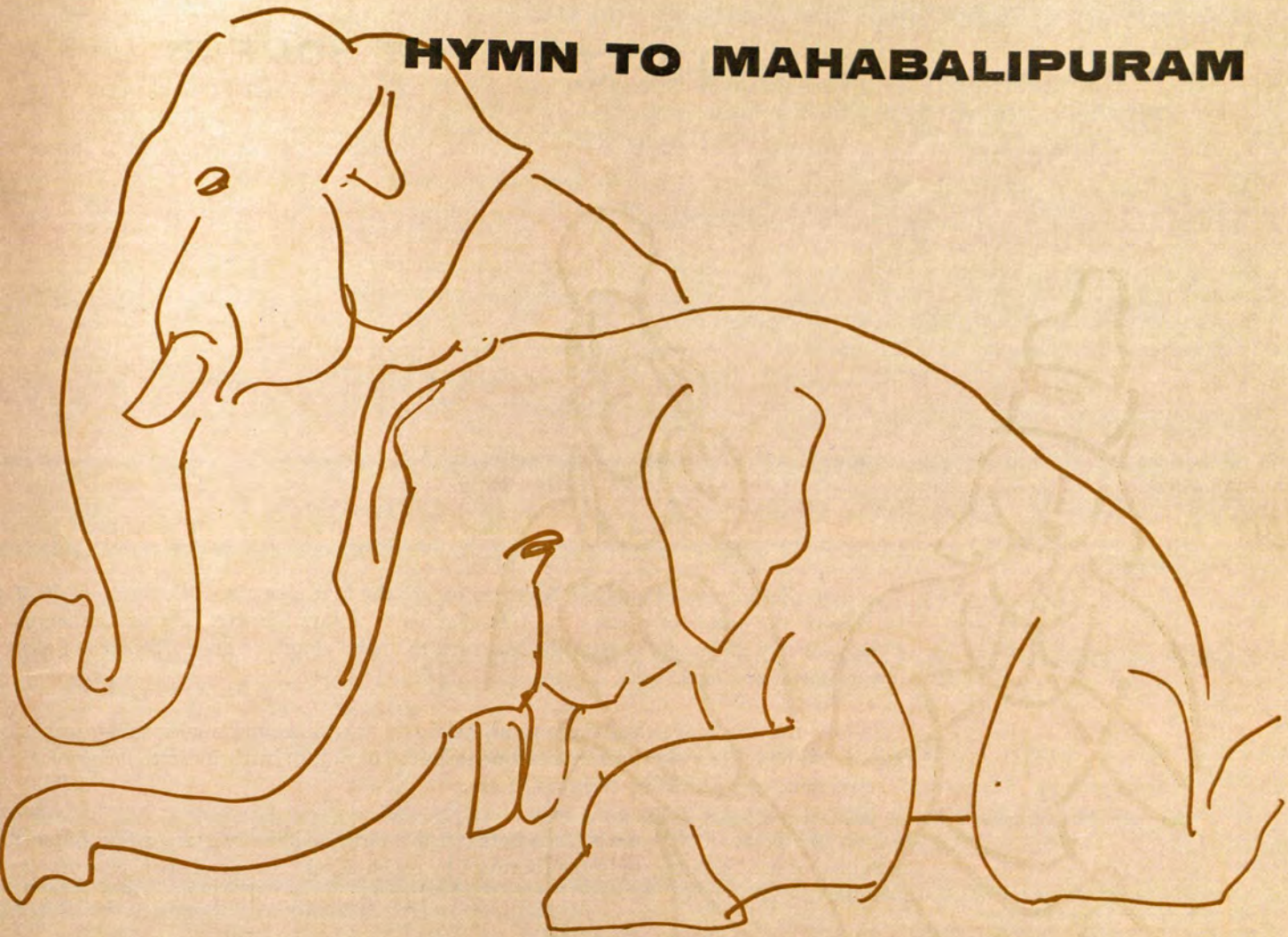
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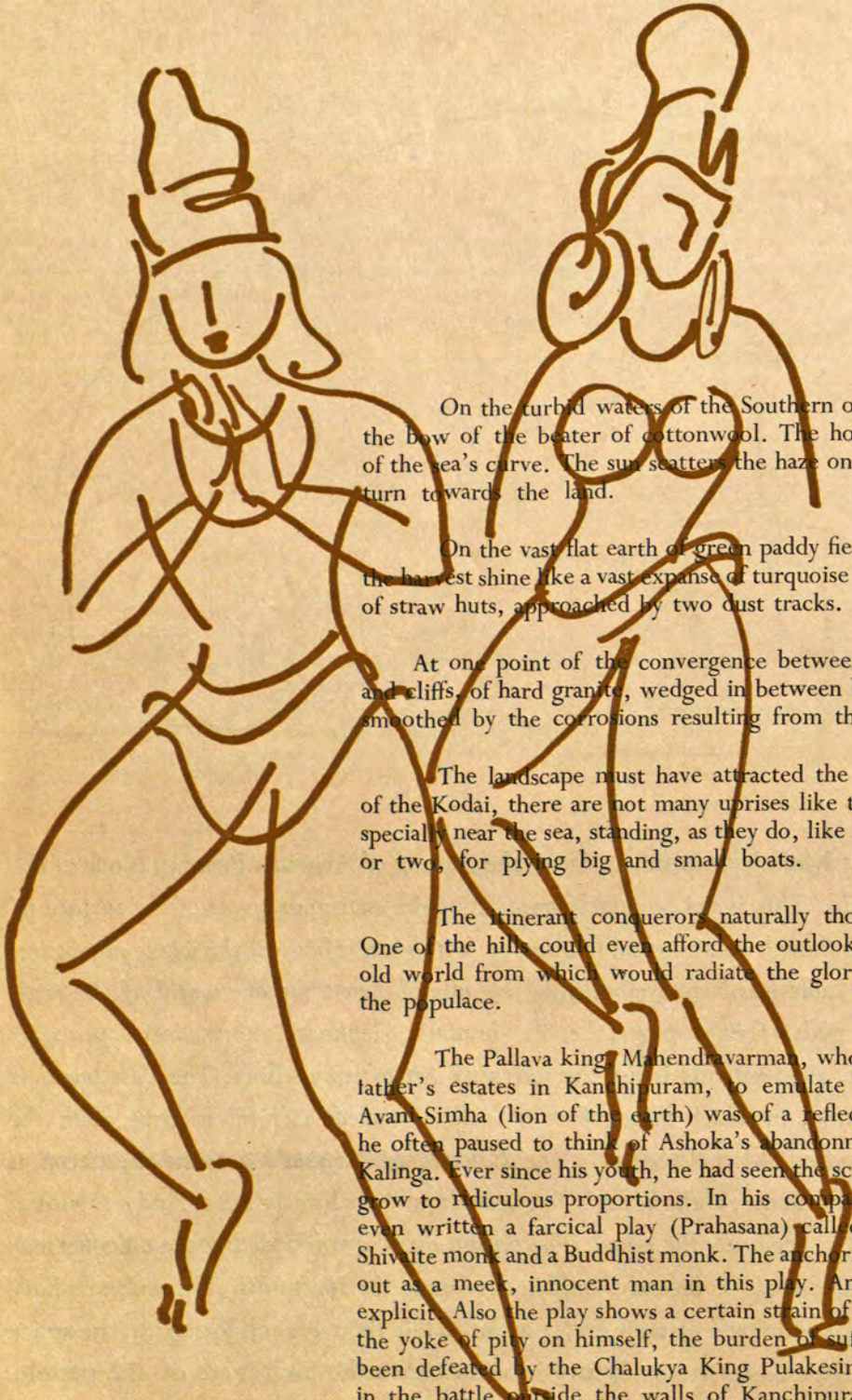


HYMN TO MAHABALIPURAM



There is no doubt that Mahabalipuram rock with the carving of Arjuna's Penance is one of the greatest sculptures of the world. This is not so merely because of the enormous space of the surface of granite which has been traced, though its size is an impressive fact, but it is because the whole microcosm of Bharavi's Kiratarjuniyam fable has been symbolically reproduced here: the one world of the myth with all the many elements, gods, flying spirits, heroes, hunters, elephants, lions, deers, peacocks and monkeys rendered into it. And yet this is not the narrative art of story-telling. The vast panel is conceived as a legendary drama, in which the conflict of wills is staged, in human terms, with the technical virtuosity of a hundred Michelangelos! The dialectic of Arjuna's genuine asceticism is adroitly counterpoised, for ambivalence, with the cat's feigned religiosity to lure the mice. And a thousand other dialectics of linear rhythm penetrate the panel. The patron may have desired that the onlooker may be able to look into the legend and the legend should look out to the spectators. The sculptors have interpreted this in the 'poetry by analogy' of their craft, so that while the seers can look into the space of the carving, the space relations in the sculpture look out into the awareness of the people. This near-perfect equivalence of the tableaux with the imagination of the fascinated persistent gazer, searching into the mystery of the theme, makes this massive rock sculpture one of the great masterpieces of world art.

THE BALLAD AND THE SOURCE



On the turbid waters of the Southern ocean, the heat mist rises like festoons above the bow of the beater of cottonwool. The horizon is always obscure beyond the length of the sea's curve. The sun scatters the haze only to create clouds of heat. The eyes of men turn towards the land.

On the vast flat earth of green paddy fields, the torrid fire melts everything, making the harvest shine like a vast expanse of turquoise blue. The dots of cattle indicate the presence of straw huts, approached by two dust tracks.

At one point of the convergence between the earth and the sea, are a few hillocks and cliffs, of hard granite, wedged in between by rough edges, coves and sponged surfaces, smoothed by the corrosions resulting from the lapping waters of the incoming tides.

The landscape must have attracted the ancients, because, after the tall mountain, of the Kodai, there are not many uprisings like these elephantine rocks in the plains belows specially near the sea, standing, as they do, like sentinels on the shore, even affording a jetty or two, for plying big and small boats.

The itinerant conquerors naturally thought of this place as a possible harbour. One of the hills could even afford the outlook for a palace—a kind of light-house of the old world from which would radiate the glory and power and illumination to overawe the populace.

The Pallava king, Mahendravarman, who had launched out from his maternal grandfather's estates in Kanchipuram, to emulate the exploits of his father, Simha-Vishnu, Avanti-Simha (lion of the earth) was of a reflective bent of mind. In between the battles he often paused to think of Ashoka's abandonment of war, during the fierce fratricide of Kalinga. Ever since his youth, he had seen the schisms between the Hindus and the Buddhists grow to ridiculous proportions. In his compassion at the follies of the priests, he had even written a farcical play (Prahasana) called *Mattavilasa*, to show a quarrel between a Shivaite monk and a Buddhist monk. The anchorite of the faith of the enlightened one, comes out as a meek, innocent man in this play. And Mahendravarman's sympathies are quite explicit. Also the play shows a certain strain of poetry, as though Mahendravarman carried the yoke of pity on himself, the burden of suffering human beings on his heart. He had been defeated by the Chalukya King Pulakesin II, although he had sacrificed many men in the battle outside the walls of Kanchipuram (Conjeevaram). And he had launched out to gain a new empire for his dynasty. The ghost of his great father, Simha-Vishnu urged him on. The words of the bard, Bharavi, author of *Kiratarjuniyam*, rang like bells in his head, echoing the lessons of devotion to which his father had listened when he, Mahendravarman, was a young man.

This essentially humane monarch is known to have courted the company of bards, singers, actors and craftsmen, all those who have given a third dimension to experience by heightening the intense moments of awareness of the disequilibrium between what life is and what it might be.

Man's destiny—what it is, how it is, and where it is going, were the questions on which he used to hold dialogues with people of all faiths.

Inside him, he was, in spite of his questionings, aware of the Buddha's refusal to answer ultimate questions.

Perhaps, he found consolation in the observation of humanity and accepted the different expressions, seeking impossible inspiration for himself in the myths, legends and fables current among the people.

There is no reason to doubt that, in an age when one sect of the Hindus abused the other, and all the Hindus together accused the Buddhists, the searchers for new consciousness, among those who might have wished for peace between the contentions of the schools, floated in an amorphous and vague world, refusing to accept pre-conceived values.

They tried to test each idea in the light of felt experience.

Scratching his head often in the presence of gnashing teeth and frothing mouths, Mahendravarman seems to have relied on the geniality of the human response.

As he wandered across the lands of the brown earth, he had to accept in his kaleidoscopic mind, the men of the different civilisations of each village. This acceptance of the multitude alone could give him the generous impulses from which to govern the kingdom. And, though he could not be the 'lamp that flickers not', his eyes shone as soon as he could look and see, always leaving room for the still unseen.

Seated under the shade of the tree in the evenings, with the insistent clamour of the beetle and hundred other insects, reminding him of time's passing, there were poems and jests between the bards of the court and the king, after the petitions of the people had been heard. And yet there were the wars, and preparations for further camps, the counting of the exchequer to pay money to the soldiers, and the replacements and displacements of regiments to look after. And, amidst all this, there was the torment of the spirit, and the sources of knowledge for the will to avenge the defeat at the hands of Pulakesin II, to seek more arms, with which to master the obscure condition and go to fight the adversaries.

The bard often said:

'Sire, if your empire is increased and the people present to you addresses, stating their grievances and ask for succour, I shall gather the fruits of my wisdom and give you counsel.

'On the evening of the great draught of moral ideas on this earth, I shall discourse about the old struggles, which are described in the myths. As you know, the bards, Bharavi and Magha, have rendered in new forms, with many additions and subtractions, the old story in *Mahabharata* of Arjuna's penance. This narrative is too regular for my taste. And I would speak of this to you as a fable, about what can be gained in this uncertain universe, if you wish to reconquer your lost territories even from the angry gods. In this way, you may get a glimpse of your own predicament. For, the mind of Arjuna, when he was to do the penance, was a labyrinth. In the midst of confusions of the forests, where every sentient thing breathed its own breath, Arjuna could not be sure whether he was pursuing shadows or reality, in wanting to have the kingdom of the Pandus back. And thus he had to contemplate the phantoms of his own imagination, and see if he could harden himself to battle against the Kurus. The inner battle in him was necessary to separate facts from fantasy, myth from desire, light from darkness. And thus would come the movement in

the static stance, of standing on one foot, with one hand raised to the sky, the provocative thought, which would make him gather his forces and go on the road of anguish, beyond doom, to fight for life itself.'

The monarch wished for the fable to be recited.

As the men of the convoy had all arrived, and were bathed in the stream and lodged in their tents, the narrative of Arjuna's penance, as described in the *Kiratarjuniyam*, filled the ears of the king late into night.

The brilliant flashes of metaphor, the somewhat erratic and yet illuminating asides, confirmed the hunches of the monarch.

In the half light of the morning, his sleep was disturbed by *paranoic* dreams. The images of the poem were flying about and some other demons of doom had appeared, in odd combinations, and separately. The heart and mind of the king were again in a whirl.

The inspiration came to exteriorise the battle, forever, on the rock, there by the sea, to fix Arjuna's penance onto space, so that he, and his successors, could look inwards into the legend and see the signs from which the will could be strengthened.

The poet was summoned and asked to tell the artisans to survey the rocks, for a possible rehearsal of the drama of man's anguish in a hostile world.

The courtiers hailed the decision of king Mahendravarman. 'Vichitra-chitta' (myriad-minded) said one. 'Chetthakari' (temple-builder) said another. 'Mattavilasa' (addicted to enjoyment) a third flattered. 'Chitrakarapali' (tiger among painters) a fourth lauded. 'We shall create a brickless, timberless, metalless and mortarless temple, which will be the mansion for Brahma, Ishvara, Vishnu'.

Thus it was that the rocks were chosen as vast spaces for experimentation in fixing the images from Being to Becoming.

The sketches on the two small rocks preceded the giant operation. Those, whose chisel had won fame in other kingdoms, were summoned. The king linked the circles of arguments, translated his dream of the cosmos, within the cosmos, and urged the muses to beckon the phantasmagoria of Arjuna's world into shapes that would move men.

The art of story-telling of the *Mahabharata* days, which had yielded to the new narrative of Bharavi and Magha, was now handed over for rendering another medium than words, in a gigantic epic in stone.

Like crickets crawling from under the leaves, with the persistent call of the hammer, the creative genii worked to set free, the flowing movements of figures on the rock, against the static ones, in teeming images, together yet apart, in a total universe of belonging, which was to be the mirror for effective action of generations, a visionary art, almost unparalleled except in the stones of Egypt, Babylon and Greece.

One is in the Many and the Many must become One—was a proverbial saying among the people. And, each speck of dust is alive in the universe. Only one thing is more alive than some other, that is to say, there are differences between qualities. These essences are: *Sattavas* (pure); *Rajas* (passionate); *Tamas* (ignorant). The various aspects of the One are the many deities and demons and heroes, incarnations of the Supreme. Life-substance-energy are the transformations of ultimate energy, in the shadow show of Maya, illusion. The awareness of the various illusions can lead to the comprehension of the whole world. And this consciousness can be attained, at the same time as one lives and works in the ordinary life. In fact, it is through work as worship that one realises one-self. One can imitate the functions of the Supreme, only by creativeness, until Being and Becoming are One.

As the rock which was to be carved, so that the legend of Arjuna's penance could look out of it in all its detail, and the onlookers could look into it, the demon behind the rock must be appeased. Therefore, a *yajna* was ordered by the king.

Agni, the principle of fire, purifies everything. And the several fires lit in the *havana kunds*, with the purest butter, could, when accompanied by the recitations of appropriate words, appease all the deities, dispel the evil spirits and bring about the situation in which the great work could begin.

The king, as the incarnation of both the spiritual and temporal authority, honoured the *yajna*, by sitting on a throne before the *havana kunds*, from which the flames leapt up, for eleven days and nights. The functionaries of the court, the bards and the artisans, all joined the congregation.

The folk came from the various parts of the kingdom to participate in the ceremony.

The songs, invocations, gestures, wails and screams of the priests, made for a sonorous drama, at the end of which the head priest announced that the prayers would be fulfilled. The head priest closed his eyes, divined the inspiration of the gods and said like an oracle: 'prayers will be fulfilled.'

At the appropriate time in the evening, the *Katha* of the *Kiratarjuniyam* was recited, and the dance drama of Arjuna's penance was enacted.

The king himself, whose eclectic imagination had embraced many ideas but seldom concentrated on one notion entire, found that, through the dance drama, the god Shiva emerged as the true hero, beyond Arjuna. The startling impact of the god, who had been considered, for a long time, the wild god of the mountains, forests and cremation grounds, came through his dance. Verily he was the essence of rhythm, movement and energy, as he danced the cosmic *Tandava* dance within the circle of fire and broke the back of the evil dwarf underfoot.

In his momentary intuitions of the rhythmic movement of the microcosm in the dancer's body, the patron sensed the divinity of movement itself. Not only in dance, but through all the energised expression—the essence of aesthetic microcosm. And he marvelled at the instinct of the bards, who had picked up the theme of Shiva's appearance as a wild hunter before Arjuna, to give him boon of the invisible weapons with which the Pandus wanted to defeat the Kurus. For centuries, the Brahmins had refused to recognise this young god, but later his courage, power and potency had been found inspiring. And his name had reverberated on the lips of the soldiers going to battle against the white Huns in the north.

The king recalled that it was nearing his fortieth birthday. And he looked at the spectacle of the youthful Shiva as the *Kirata*, the wild hunter, subduing Arjuna. And he felt as sad as he had been elated a little while ago, at the impending arrival of old age. The change would soon begin, through the passing of his own youth. He would lose the will by which he had brought nearly the whole of South India under his sway. Maybe he could, by seeing the drama enacted on stone, offer a prayer to the gods, which would inspire him throughout his later life and give hope and will and energy to his son, Narasimha. As his eyes turned to the young prince, seated by him, he even felt a tremor of envy pass through him. And then he wished for all his generous impulses to possess him, so that he could bless the inheritor with the instinct for life and power and influence. And he must soon marry Narasimha off to a beautiful Uma, who would bear a son, to continue the race of the Pallavas. And, underneath his breath, he whispered the name of Shiva as in a prayer.

The only difficulty was how to communicate to the artisans, skilful men as they were, who had worked in guilds on important temples, for Harsha, and Pulakesin II, at Ajanta for the Buddhists, so they might understand the miracles that he wanted to see enacted on this rock. Nothing they had done so far could have been so gigantic. They said, in distant



Egypt and Babylon and Greece, there were giant sculptures. But those were mostly in the round, like the statue of king Rameses Two on the upper Nile. There were also the giant Buddhas of Bamiyan. But no one had ever carved a rock as large as this and brought a symbolic cosmos into being, which may be the source of becoming.

A session with the craftsmen was called for and was duly arranged. The king explained his wish that the legend of Arjuna's penance and Shiva's appearance, as the wild hunter, must be so carved on the rock that the legend would *look out* to the people and the people might be able to *look into* the legend.

Spoke the head artisan, descended from the Chalukyan sculptor, Sovarsi:

'Vichitra-chitta is your title, king, and, to be sure, you are curious-minded. Apart from the arts of war, you have also learnt to build cities, to handle the chisel, to play the flute and to compose poems. And now you wish to augur the era of sculpture in those rocks, in the nearby caves, and by the raising of temples with vimanas and mandapas and gopuras. I have learnt from my ancestors how to entwine the flying forms of the gods and apsaras with the myriad forms of elephants and lions and bulls and deers and snakes and swans and peacocks and mice. You ask that the legend on the yonder rock should *look out* to the spectators and the onlookers may *look into* the legend. But, as you know, words have sound to them and sound has different rhythms, which arise from the plexus and go back in vibrant notes to stir the underlayers of the kundalini. The poetry of carving expresses itself in a different rhythm. It has its own flow. Its music reaches us from the linear rhythms, which are continuous, and join the whole world without a visible binding line from below. You have given us so much space, in which you ask for the movement of the gods, heroes and animals to be contained. Space has its own laws. If you are patient, the conqueror of the four quarters, Chakravartin, will see the Chakravartis of carving conquer this space. As you want the legend to *look out* to people and people to *look into* the legend, so the space of the universe of the *Kirtarjunyam* drama will come out of the rock to the people and the people will be able to go into the space. This I can promise on behalf of my colleagues.'

The king blushed at the restrained, but genuine, rebuke implicit in an artist's words.

He said:

'The dialogue is ended. No advice from me will interfere with your work. Nor should the canons, ordained by the priests in the Shastras, limit your capacities. I confer on you the freedom of the rock.'

One of the carvers, from the Satavahana country, spoke:

'Son of the house of Sovarsi, Devalaya Chakravarti, the words of the king, who has been styled Chitrakarpali, tiger among the painters, are not meaningless. He wants us to see that the legend *looks out* of the rock and the spectators *look into* the legend. I have been accustomed to work in the cave temples, north of Badami, on the arc of the great track, from the sea into the Deccan. And our chisels were like the flake implements of the most ancient periods. We tried to create figures, in three dimensions, from the surface of the cave walls. I have learnt to do such relief work and offer myself, as a humble servant of the chisel, which knows how to create the concave.'

Another sculptor from the Deccan spoke:

'The three dimensional art is to be seen in some of the independent figurines of Amaravati. Some of the heads of the enlightened one, carved by my ancestors, are more perfect than any head of Apollo hewn in Gandhara.'

The scion of the house of Sovars spoke.

'In a narrow cave where you need room even to move about, a concave sculpture, with troughs rather than protruberances, is a practical device. The concave suggests mass,

through the very pressure of the air in a small space. There is no distance in the cave to create illusion. From the remotest times, the contours of the carved figures in the caves get their effects through the inverted sculpture. The figures open up to new perspectives, as you draw near or far. And carving of this kind is true sculpture, because it creates the flow of sculpted space. The independent, three-dimensional figure has to create its own rhythms from its self-contained body. The rock before us, though in the open, is still embedded in the large cave of the sky and the earth. We must create in it the rhythms which the 'air brush' technique brought about among the crowded forms of the paintings on the walls of Ajanta.'

Said a member of the guild from Varanasi:

'The stone in the Satavahana country is rough sandstone and gives a rugged effect. The buff stone of Sarnath is harder and gives a smoother finish.'

The master craftsman, scion of Sovarsi, spoke:

'The ruggedness of sculpture is only superficial. If the carving is part of the rhythmic flow of a whole wall, then the rough passages are punctuated by smooth flowing lines.'

'Always in carving, we move the chisel in point-counter-point.'

'The difficulty here is that the whole rock before us is of one piece. One false stroke, and the wrong chipping of a figure, and the whole rock will be violated and rendered useless.'

Said another member of the guild from Badami:

'The flaking of the great concave layers will have to be done carefully.'

Said a member of the guild from Kalinga:

'The concave and the convex will have to be mixed, if the whole universe of the forest, where Arjuna is doing his penance is to be brought about. The inverted form must be merged into the rounded form, so as to make the transition seem imperceptible.'

Said the master craftsman, scion of the Sovarsi:

'Concave forms are like waves, with clear troughs and valleys, with the crests rising high, here and there, as on a troubled sea. Convex sculpture creates its illusion through the systematic folds, swellings and billowings. The thing to do is to combine the concave and the convex forms, as did the Egyptians in dynamic equivalence. The secret of the figures is that they must leap out of the contours of the rock, as though breathing. One figure must lead on to the next, and the next to the next, evolving its own perspective, as an organic rhythm. The effect must be, as the king desires. 'The legend must *look out* of the rock and the spectator must *look into* the legend.' In the words of our craft, space must look out of the rock and we must look into space. And when the people move, before this wall of wonders, they must be kept moving, to observe the different effects of the different perspectives, each part of the other, the other part of each. The best way to achieve this is to begin by a vision of the whole rock in drawings, on the sister rock there, a rehearsal for the final dance drama on the great rock.'

Let us to work... '

M.R.A.



THE LEGEND OF ARJUNA'S PENANCE

The legend of *Arjuna's Penance* was first narrated in the *Mahabharata* by the editor, Vyasa, as part of the story of the struggle between the cousins, Kauravas and Pandavas. During the succeeding centuries after the writing of *Mahabharata*, the later poets were advised to take up stories of the ancient themes and retell them. The bard, Bharavi, who was born and lived in South India in the 5th or 6th century, rendered again this episode from the old epic entitling it: *Kiratarjuniyam*.

Kiratarjuniyam

Bharavi was an accomplished poet, who was made laureate by a king of the South and is considered to be the near equal of Kalidasa, though different, as his poetry is not so sweet and melodious as that of the bard of Ujjain, but is vigorous, spirited and rhetorical. The story of *Arjuna's Penance*, as told by Bharavi, is a variation of the original narrative.

At any rate, this episode is not understandable unless we put down the previous events in the story of *Mahabharata*, after which *Arjuna's* resort to penance becomes significant.

We will, therefore, record here, the background, before telling the story of *Kiratarjuniyam*, as told by the bard Bharavi.

Background

Of the princes of the race descended from the moon, the two principal branches were Yadavas and Pauravas.

And from the Pauravas was descended Bharata. And ninth in descent from Puru was Kuru. And fourteenth from Kuru came Santanu. And from Santanu, by his first wife, Ganga, the eldest born was Bhishma.

And by his second wife, Satyawati, Santanu had two sons, Chitrangada (who was killed by a Gandharva of the same name in battle) and Vichitravirya, who died childless leaving two widows, named Ambika and Ambalika.

Of the adopted sons of Vichitravirya were Dhritarashtra and Pandu. Thus these two were the descendants of Kuru and were given the patronymic Kaurava.

Pandu, the Kaurava, chose to become a hermit, after leading a family life for some years and left the kingdom in the charge of his elder brother, Dhritarashtra, while his five sons were still children.



The five sons of Pandu were brought up as accomplished princes under the tender care of their uncle, the king Dhritarashtra. And so Dhritarashtra nominated Yudhishtira as heir apparent to the kingdom of Hastinapura, in preference to his own eldest son, Duryodhana.

Duryodhana, embittered by jealousy of his five cousins, succeeded in inducing his father to send the Pandus to a place called Varanavata, where he had laid a plot to burn them alive, in a house made of lac and other combustible materials.

The Pandus found out the plot in time and escaped death, when the house was set on fire, but it was rumoured that they had died there along with their mother.

After their escape, the Pandus lived in the jungles, disguised as holy men.

During their exile, Arjuna, the third of the Pandu brothers, who was noble, generous and truly heroic among all the brothers, and had learned archery from the family preceptor, Drona, won the hand of Draupadi, daughter of Drupada, king of the Panchalas, and made her the common wife of himself and his four brothers. The rumour of this triumph spread and the uncle of the Pandus, Dhritarashtra, heard that his nephews were still alive. So he called them back to Hastinapura, divided his kingdom between his own sons and the Pandu brothers, giving the latter the territory beyond the Yamuna to the north, with Indraprastha as the capital.

Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandus, conquered the four quarters from his fort in Indraprastha and performed the Rajasuya sacrifice.

A just and noble ruler, Yudhishtira was called Dharmaraja, or Dharma, for his righteousness. Of unswerving rectitude, trained in the science of war by the Guru Drona, loved by the people, he and his four brothers excited the hatred of their uncle's disinherited son, Duryodhana, all the more now that the Pandus' fame had spread.

Duryodhana prevailed upon Yudhishtira-Dharmaraja to a gambling match.

The person put to play against Yudhishtira was one Sakuni, who was not only a skilled player but also a dexterous cheat.

Yudhishtira-Dharmaraja, lost the gambling match and forfeited his kingdom, his wealth, his brothers and the common wife, Draupadi.

Duryodhana ordered his captive cousins and their wife, Draupadi, to appear in his court and instigated his brother Dussasana, to drag Draupadi by the hair up to his throne and divest her of her sari, while he himself taunted her and asked her to come and sit on his lap by showing her his thigh.

Bhima, the second of the Pandu princes, who drew his inspiration from Vayu, the god of wind, was angered at this barbaric act and vowed to drink the blood of Dussasana and break the thigh of Duryodhana.

Dhritarashtra, the old king, heard of this righteous vow and tried to bring about peace between Duryodhana and his nephews, the Pandu princes, by restoring to the latter their freedom from the clutches of his son and by restoring their lost kingdom to his nephews.

Baffled in his design to ruin the Pandus, Duryodhana held consultations with his courtiers, Sakuni, Karna and others and he invited Yudhishtira to another gambling match. This time the condition was that the losing party should spend twelve years in a forest and live *incognito* during the thirteenth year. The penalty of being discovered in any city would be that the condemned party would spend another thirteen years in exile.

Yudhishtira again lost the gambling match and had to retire, with his brothers and Draupadi, into the forest again.

And, at this stage Bharavi the bard, takes up the story of Mahabharata and tells of Arjuna's Penance, which is the basis of the carvings on the great rock at Mahabalipuram.

After their return to the Dwaita forest, the Pandus were bemoaning their misfortunes, as they sat together one evening.

Smarting under the insults she had suffered and pain to see her five husbands fallen from their glory, Draupadi addressed Yudhishtira-Dharma, asking him how he could be so forebearing,



in spite of the humiliations he had seen offered to her, the daughter of a mighty king, and the wife of renowned heroes. And she urged him to fight and regain his lost kingdom.

Yudhishtira-Dharma said that he would do nothing in haste but pursue the righteous path and remain patient and calm, as that alone would ensure his success.

The proud Bhima, the second of the Pandus, supported Draupadi and spoke at length about the need for dynamic action on the part of his eldest brother Yudhishtira. 'Patience, meekness and resignation cannot win back the kingdom or restore glory', he said.

Yudhishtira remained calm and unshaken. He told Bhima that, though the latter's anger was justified, they were not yet prepared to fight against the enemy and would ruin their cause, if they acted in haste.

Whereupon Bhima realised that his brother was right and remained silent.

At this juncture, the sage Vyasa appeared.

The Pandu brothers offered him obeisances.

Vyasa told them that, in view of their difficulties, he would initiate Yudhishtira into the mysteries of the mantra which might be imparted to Arjuna, in order to enable him to propitiate the gods Indra and Shiva, by religious austerities and secure such miraculous weapons as would make him invisible in battle, thus ensuring final victory to the Pandus. He also advised the Pandus to go and live in some other forest. And then he disappeared.

The Pandus now retired to the Kamayaka forest.

After a few days here, Yudhishtira spoke to Arjuna. He explained to him the invisible strength of Bhishma and the Kurus trained by Drona, and the impossibility of securing victory, in spite of divine help. Then he imparted to him the inspiration he had obtained from the sage Vyasa and asked him to go to the Indrakila mountain in the Himalayas to do penances to propitiate the god Indra.

Arjuna got ready to obey the will of Yudhishtira-Dharma.

The Brahmins gave their blessings and told Arjuna he would soon be able to realise victory.

Draupadi also prayed for him by repeating the magic words, 'A-gau, a-gau', which had been uttered by Dusshasana.

The miraculous powers of this *mantra* enabled Arjuna to fly to the Indrakila mountain with the speed of thought.

On reaching his destination, Arjuna was met by an old Brahmin, who was no other than god Indra in disguise. And this sage tried to dissuade Arjuna from doing penances. As he could not shake the Pandu from his resolve, Indra revealed himself, and advised him to practise austerities to propitiate Shiva to win the celestial weapons which he wanted.

Arjuna now devoted himself to his penances.

Seeing him suffer from severe austerities, the sages were frightened for his life and went to Shiva to make Arjuna resist from the ascetic practices.

The great god Shiva told them that there was no need to fear for Arjuna's life, that he knew of the reasons for Arjuna's asceticism, and would answer his prayers on that very day.

As the sages departed, Shiva assumed the form of a Kirata, a wild hunter, armed with a bow and arrow. And, accompanied by his spouse, Uma, and some attendants, all disguised as kiratas, he went to the forest, where Arjuna was doing penances.

As the great Shiva came near Arjuna, he saw a demon named Muka in the form of a boar rushing at the ascetic.

Arjuna also saw the boar and strung his bow and shot an arrow at the animal.



At that very moment, the arrow from the kirata's bow struck the boar.

Pierced by two arrows at the same time, the demon assumed his real form and gave up his life.

A hot dispute now ensued between the kirata and Arjuna about who had killed the animal first.

Arjuna blamed the wild hunter for violating the convention of the chase, in shooting at the boar when he himself (Arjuna) had aimed at it first.

The kirata declared that it was he who had aimed at the boar first and that it was his arrow that had felled the beast.

The high words soon led to blows.

A terrible struggle followed, in which the adversaries showered poisonous serpent-like arrows on each other.

Arjuna was surprised to see that the kirata still stood invulnerable, though all his (Arjuna's) arrows were exhausted. And he now took up his big bow and struck bigger thunderbolt arrows at the kirata.

The wild hunter snatched the bow from Arjuna.

Arjuna now struck the kirata with his great sword. But the sword broke into pieces.

The hero showered branches of trees and stones on the kirata, but the wild hunter was inviolate.

At last Arjuna advanced and struck the mountaineer with his fist.

The kirata, who was Shiva in disguise, caught Arjuna in his terrible grip, until the hero fell to the ground unconscious.

A little later, when he recovered and stood up, he saw the garland he had offered to the clay image of Shiva, now adorning the head of the kirata. Thus he recognised the great god and, falling at his feet, begged forgiveness for attacking him.

The great god Shiva, who had now resumed his own form, embraced the saint-hero and praised him for his courage and prowess in the encounter. And he gave to Arjuna the boon he had desired through his austerities and the knowledge of the Pashu-pata weapons, asking him to visit him in heaven. Then Shiva vanished into thin air.

Arjuna saw all the gods, Varuna, Kubera, Indra, descend upon the mountain, before him, and they blessed him and gave him their respective weapons and departed.

Arjuna now found Indra's aerial chariot waiting for him, and he ascended this, and found himself in the glorious abode of the gods.

There he was given many more celestial weapons and transported back to Gandhamadana on the earth, where his brothers and Draupadi had come to receive him.

The bard Bharavi follows this story of Arjuna's penance, how the austerities were offered and how he secured the boon, more or less as in the Mahabharata narrative. Only, he treats all the characters as beings and invests the narrative with the interests that the people of his time, like King Mahendravarman, would find in it. The old myth becomes a new myth and perhaps more relevant for the monarch of a period when the struggle between the Hindu and the Buddhist faiths was at its height and when the heroes of the time needed inspiration from the human motives of the characters, in a poem rather than as instruction from the divines. Also the poet of the 6th century introduces magnificent descriptions of the mountains of Indrakila forests, of Gandhamadana and of the seasons and the dawns and moonshine. In fact, Bharavi makes gods, humans, animals and plants breathe as equal incarnations of life. Apsaras appear and try to enchant the saint-hero away from his devotions. And the problem of evil is faced as a contrast of innocence and experience.

This human narrative found great currency in South Indian courts of the early Pallava period. And it is likely that King Mahendravarman of the Pallavas, may have found the Kiratarjuniyam an ideal story for inspiration either in its original form, or in the variation in Magha's poem, the Sisupalavadha.

Certainly, the mythical tale of Arjuna's penance was a popular story among the people of that time and embodies the shared pool of values in moral behaviour, possible to fix as the theme for illustration in the capital of the Pallava monarchs.

—M. R. A.



THE VISION OF THE ROCK AND THE PLASTIC SITUATION OF THE PANELS

If you look at the rocks of Mahabalipuram for the first time, that first look is important. You cannot move away, but you stand to absorb the strange combination of boulders almost flying off from the earth into the sea, and then returning to rest on the land. The freshness of the view plunges you into the areas where the earth, the sea and the sky and all the manifestations of phenomena, are fused in the imagination.

The cosmogony of the peoples of the early centuries was built on such instinctive kinship with all nature. They saw things for the first time, as it were.

This intuitive naturalism included Man as a growth from the worm, or fish, or plant, or reptile. Everything was incarnated in everything else, according to the lower or higher deeds of *primaeval* creation. The only difference between the human, animal, and the other manifestations of nature, was the coming of the dim awareness of knowledge and experience into Man. The heroes won the enlightenment through hard penances, austerities and yoga.

Mahendravarman chose this site for the creation of the symbolic world of the Kiratarjuniyam story, of the Mahabharata, rendered by Bharavi, because he saw here, in these rocks, enough space for the unfolding of the whole episode. In this recreation of the legend there would be the hero, the flying spirits, the forms of men and beasts, the memory images of birds, the essential forms necessary for the total symbology.

The freshness of outlook of Mahendravarman is important to bear in mind. He did not believe in dogmatic Hinduism, nor in the institutionalised Buddhist order. In his own writings, he laughs at both. His philosophy of life seems to have arisen from his urge for felt experience.

The vision of the landscape, therefore, coincided with the intuition that he could get his craftsmen to build a new legend for him, in full confrontation of the rock and yet by absorbing the lessons of artistic activity of the rocks of Ajanta, of Amravati, in the valley of Nagarjunakonda and at Aihole, carved out already by master craftsmen.

There had been a descent from the higher realisations of the forest books and the truths enunciated by the Buddha, into primitivist ritual. It is not unlikely that the local spirits of these rocks were legendary serpent kings or nagas who ruled the waste land.

Against the prevailing darkness, Mahendravarman sought to experiment with a fable, which would bring out from the teeming life of gods and demons and men, the vitality of power which Arjuna was said to have acquired through his penances, to conquer the vast expanses of Bharat.





The Fable of Mahabalipuram

Mahendravarman told the craftsmen the story of the Kiratarjuniyam, or Arjuna's penance, interpolating his narrative with his own commentary:

'The rock is to become a dream.

'At first we have to appease the Naga King, who, according to the local people, possesses the rock. So, you may begin with the cleft, which nature has provided right in the middle of the rock. With the Naga King will be the Naga Queen. And the Naga folk will be symbolised by one-hooded snake.

'To be sure, we will follow here the symbolic method, the faces and forms will be metaphorical. The flesh will be reduced, as in the figures in Amaravati. The relief will rise from the surface almost as in the paintings in Ajanta, in movement, as in dance. Says the Lankavatrasutra: "As a picture shows highness and lowness, whereas there is nothing of the sort in it. . . it is like the craftsman's surface on which there is no depression or elevation as imagined by the ignorant."

'Craftsmen of the great brotherhood, you understand the impossibility of attaining a proper expression of feeling in painting or sculpture without a knowledge of lyrical movement of the dance. The snake in the cleft could be swaying and dancing. What a situation this rock has offered, with the cleft! It is like my divided soul. My soul is like a snake sinuous and glides into my dreams.'





Main Rock

'Oh granite! Oh vast surface of the rock! Oh heavens!

'How are we to begin? Where! And will it ever end? Our labour of love on this rock?'

Such must have been the feelings of the sculptors face to face with the plastic situation of translating the epic of Bharavi, from words into images.

The ancient *Shilpashastras* have told us that the carvers often did *yoga* before beginning their creative work. Perhaps, this kind of meditation was not done as a formal prayer, but occupied the brooding craftsmen for days and nights. The *Dhyanamantira* or the disposition of the various figures was imagined in patterns fairly completely before the chisel was applied.

The cleft was perhaps the best place to begin the process.

This has led many people to think of the scene as the drama of the birth of Ganga—Gangavatarana.

We feel that the relief represents the encounter of Arjuna with the Kirata.

Whatever interpretation may be accepted, there is no doubt about the epic scale of the carving on the face of the enormous rock.

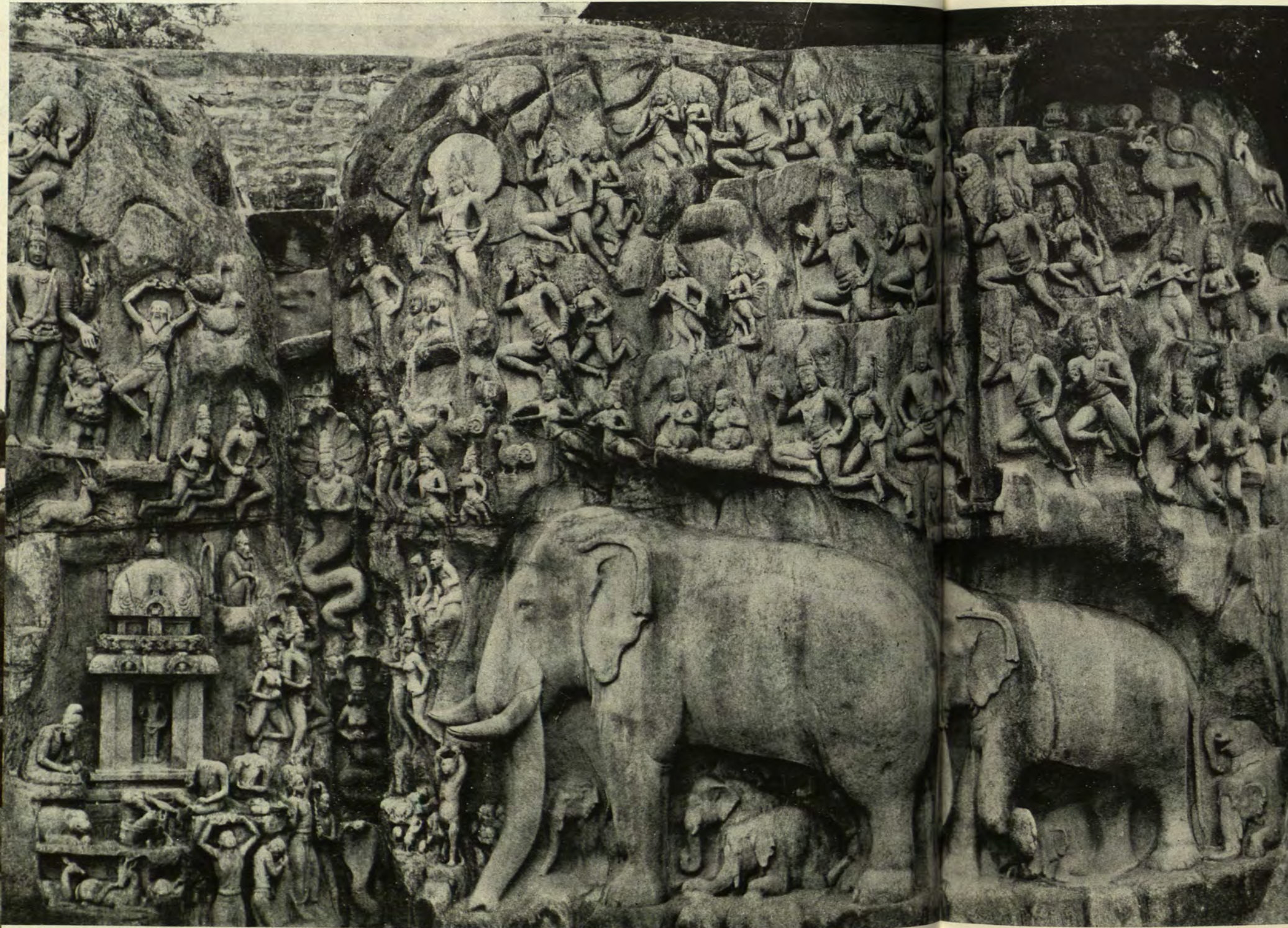
The genius of the sculptors has used the big cleft, the crevices, the ups and downs, even the cracks to create a plastic situation for each part of the puranic story in the form of finished sculpture.

The cubes cut out on the unfinished part of the rock, show that they conceived the whole composition as idea-image: image-idea, interpenetrating the square and the rectangles and the roundels in integral relationship, as they scooped their way to create the relief.

The plastic elements have led to groupings which certainly create a harmony of all living beings of the Universe, co-existing with the Gods.

The inner relationship, the binding line as it were, runs through the nagas, the human beings, the gods, ascetics and flying spirits. Perhaps, the instinctive joy in the life-breath, the love of nature, informs the desire to bring the whole cosmos into being.

The exuberance of passion permeates this microcosm, in the abstract concept of the vast geometry. The tenderness towards the swans and deer, and even the mice, brings the kind of understanding that was in the Jatakas. The sense of humour of Mahendrarman enlivens the cat's fraudulent penance as against the genuine asceticism of Arjuna and keeps the whole world on the most intimate level. And the monkey family, with the male monkey taking the lice out of the female, nearly makes this rock one of the earliest adventures in the art of humanism.





The Cleft

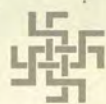
The advice of the king apart, the sculptors' hands had been trained to reproduce the vibrant grace of movement. The hooded figure of the Snake King, with the nine petals on his head, opening out like a lotus flower nimbus into the human face, is fused with the curvacious torso, winding itself into bends, which taper down to the tail.

Below, the Naga Queen with a three petalled cobra head, is contrasted, by her reduced size and the position of the three bends which mould the torso downwards towards the tip.

And, immediately below, is a symbol of the teeming millions of the snake population, with its single hood outspread, almost in the *tribhanga* pose, in spite of the fact that the cleft ends and suggests the continuation of the rest of the snake's body into the rock itself.

These three dancing snake figures, right in the middle of the rock, set the whole tone of the supple animation, which was to reform the great dance drama of Arjuna's penance.





could also be shown dancing, without dancing, in a rectangle.

Two swans would show his gracious soul flying towards heaven, a couple of flying Gandharvas taking the message to the heavens in eternal flight could face the cleft and float away.

The tender deer would show in the expressive gesture of innocence, the stirring of life itself into action after the boon is given.

And the boon would be given, to be sure, by the great god Shiva, who would be larger than Arjuna as a divinity, handsomer than all men, with his proper implements and with a dwarf soldier guarding him.

The composition of the panel indeed reproduces the central drama by breaking the planes on which the relief figures work out their energies.

Arjuna is carved with a careful detailed exposition of his hard ribs, bereft of all flesh, his lean left leg contrasted to the triangular right leg—further contrasted to the sharp triangles of the two uplifted arms, with the inert bearded face and mop of long hair, all concentrated into the *bhava* of a body on the verge of death.

The heavy swans are like the two divided parts of his heavy soul.

The lyric beauty of weightless flight of the Gandharvas displays the sureness of the carving of figures which suggest endless flight.

The deer is enlivened with impetuous movement. And the great god Shiva evokes the sensuous warmth of the Lord of all creation, extending his left hand in compassion from a proud presence, symbolically giving the gift as only the transcendental powers can concede a little when they are convinced that the necessary devotion has been offered.

The earthly figure of the protector stands between the yogi and the god.

If this was meant to be continuous narration, then the various panels become connected on their different pedestals, by the sculptor following the technique almost of wall painting—freeing the figures into symbolical form and hoping they would radiate the connection through the contrast. The linear rhythm of the earliest carvings at Sanchi and Amaravati extends itself into fluid strokes.

The cursive technique, however, brings a newness to the execution because there is no suggestion of any such composition in the sculpture before the 6th century. The outlines of the relief, with its varying thicknesses, are emphasised by the abstract shadows scooped out into the rock to suggest other dimensions than the flat plane of the rock.

Arjuna's Penance

The hero of the story, Arjuna, himself had to be near the centre. Not as important a figure as he is in the encyclopaedia of hero-worship, the *Mahabharata*, but as one of the many figures in this illusory cosmos, where the gods must be bigger than men. It is in his human incarnation that he was to do the yoga, to win the weapons from the great god Shiva. The *Shilpashastras* have given many technical recipes about proportions and other injunctions about the *talas* of the total height of the figure. But the King preferred that the Shilpis should forget the *Shastras*. 'The skill is in your hands and the metaphor is known to you', said the King. 'Arjuna is to do the severest penance by standing forever on his left leg, with his arms raised, so that the fingers of his hands are interlocked above. And he grows old in the years during which he practises his austerities, till he is emaciated from hunger and thirst and about to collapse.'

'In the six limbs of painting of the *Kama Sutra* of Vatsyayana, which are not practical rules, but have deeper meaning, there is one, I think, which has significance for you, *Bhava*. I interpret this to be the suggestion of action and the feeling thereof. The yoga here is performed through austere subjection of the physical body to the ordeal of standing on one leg. The challenge before you is to reproduce the feeling of the penances.'

'And in order that this penance of Arjuna may appeal to Lord Shiva, the great God must come in his majesty and look down on the prince with pity and grant the boon—the gods of the Hindus always elevate the pains of human existence.'

The sculptors had listened to their mentor but tried to forget his advice. To be sure, Arjuna must be shown doing his penance, somewhere near the hallowed figures of the Naga King and Queen.

The rectangles of the space in the cleft were easy to bring into movement, as the movement of the snakes itself was rhythmic, but how to infuse utility and movement in the yoga pose of Arjuna's penance! Perhaps the lifted leg would suggest that. And was not there known to be an emaciated Buddha figure in Gandhara! Arjuna grown old like a Rishimuni



The Temple

The craftsmen cut out large cubes and rectangles and carved at will the shrine of the god Shiva with priests, ascetics and worshippers, as well as a lion, a monkey and deer and Naga King and Queen. This composition is a counterpart of the one showing Arjuna's Penance on top, as though the earthly scene had to be presented below the portion where the hero was performing his austerities.

While the figures in the panel showing Arjuna recede a little to suggest interior space, the shrine and the worshippers below jut out into exterior space.

The drama here is much more obvious.

The God in the temple stands upright. The ascetic, presumably Arjuna, is seated cross-legged on the left hand side, the priests whose hands have been damaged by time are seated on the right hand base, as well as below, with a lion thrusting his torso out in the mood of anger; the deer rest tenderly in a rectangular cave below. The sun worshipper by the cleft is gazing at Surya, with arms raised like Arjuna. The other one stands bent before the mother Ganga, pouring water in supplication. The Naga and the Nagini figures, parallel to the shrine, and the female figure below are looking towards the cleft.



The highlight of this panel is the old monkey, almost a satirical portrait of a worshipper with its tail rising and falling in a V-shaped rhythmic curve.

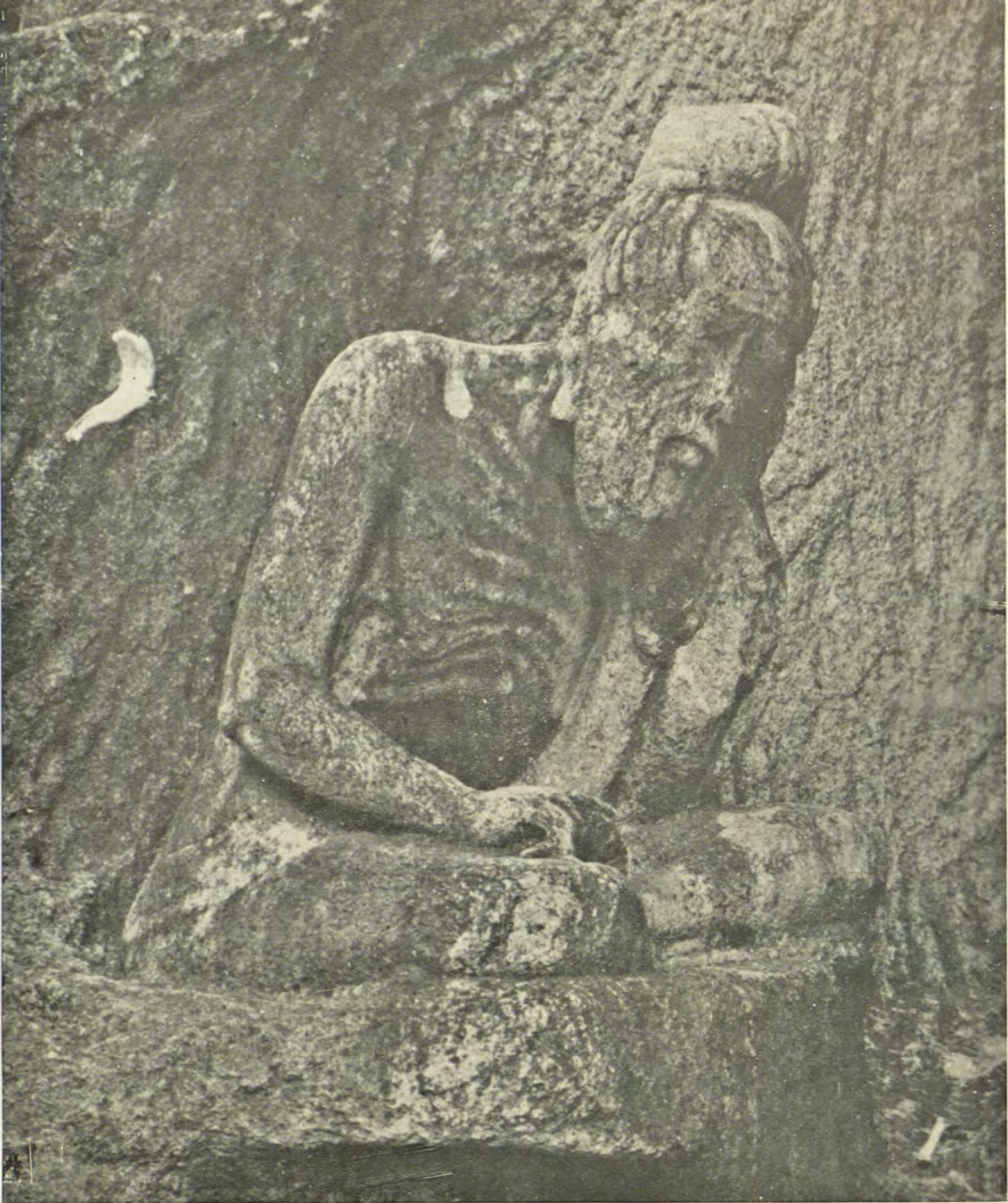
The same metaphorical method, as in the panel above, is followed. The emphasis is on the volumes of the swelling flesh, on the figures yielding to curvacious forms. The carving of the lion's head, the subtle dexterity of the incisions into the shapes of the deer, and the mockery implicit in the unencumbered spherical planes of the large monkey, the hardness of the figures of priests, the rigidity of the sun worshipper and the water pourer are all counterpoised with the full, rich configurations of the Naga and the Nagini and the female worshipper below.

The painters of Ajanta had often sought to give the illusion of relief, through shading. The carvers here have brought out the three dimensional figures from the granite rock by deliberate scooping out of stone to create depth. This attempt to reach interior space is symbolic of the drama of prayers and austerities which was to end up in the realisation of weapons.

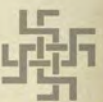
Altogether, this panel achieves its end at an intuitive perspective of spiritual struggle, with a mastery of the chisel equal to any other in Indian sculpture.







Details of the ascetic



Gandharvas, Kings and Queens

The panels on the right hand side of the cleft adumbrate the forms of Gandharvas, kings and queens, fascinated monkeys, demons, birds and the giant elephants, all moving towards the Ganga on the banks of which the hero is performing his penance.

The figures created by the large sweeping strokes of the chisel, which free the rock and reproduce the vibrant outlines of this crowded world, are not decorative as may seem on a superficial glance, but rhythmic with one panel adjusted in point counter point.

The same *bhakti* or devotion, which had inspired the people to turn to the Bodhisattva at Ajanta, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, inspire them by the rumour of the great drama of Arjuna's penance.

The celestial musicians, with their cylindrical bodies, advance across the shallow stage of the forests, differentiated from each other and yet retaining symbolical shape, because they represent others of their kind in the cosmos.

Among the lovely shapes in this part of the composition one should note the elegant king and queen with their pliant bodies, almost like those of the celestial musicians, advancing effortlessly in adoration towards the central scene.

And as if to contrast their supple grace, the sculptor has put the male and female monkey above them and the giant contours of the mellow trunk and tusks of the dreamy eyed old elephant.

Therefore, Mahendravarman wanted the sculptors to show the teeming crowds of figures emerging from all sides and swirling towards the scene of the great penance, suggesting the change that had come into the minds of all by the heroism of Arjuna.

The portrayal of the convergence of these people is radiant with a spiritual movement of which their phenomenal flight is merely a reflection.

This surrealist fantasy is on three planes. The perceiver of the perceptions is the invisible sculptor.

The perceived presences are physical yet symbolic, moving through illusory space as do all sentient beings in the endless substance of Maya.

The apperception of their tremulous feelings is given in their torso, enlivened by movement, springing from the core of action, the eternal dance, and realising themselves in the tenderness and solicitude they have towards the suffering Arjuna.

Of the teeming populations of the earth, the animals and birds are also a vital part, if the doctrine of the unity of life is true.

Therefore, as part of the created world, the elephants, the lions, the deer, the peacocks, the swans, the cat, the mice, and the redoubtable monkeys—the next cousins of the humans, all come to partake of the drama.

They too are swaying, moving or informed by the *bhava* of the miracle. The carving of these forms shows the same plasticity, which has been brought to the gods, men and demons. And yet the flawless contours highlight them. The smoothness of the skin of the giant elephant with the small eyes closed in reverie, and the unreal poise of the cat proportioned to suggest mockery of the approach to otherness, fascinatingly depict the contrasting facets of animal behaviour.

The arched birds all become symbols of the search for a celestial purity.

The exquisite linear precision of the carving, the softness of the shading, and the lyrical anxiety abstracted into each figure, convey the impression of the perfection of forms that has been seen in Mathura and Sarnath in single figures.

Only here, the whole vast rock undulates with scene after scene of the vital flow of life, in fables within fables, like consecutive movements in an unending drama of life, vibrant in each gesture, tremulous in each expression of the limbs animated by the imagination which could catch the fluctuating movement of illusion in the concrete dream of reality.





The Cat

The greatest counterpoise is, however, in the satirical scene of the cat doing its penances, with the mice looking on from all sides. This humorous episode, which keeps the philosophical doubt of Mahendravarman within the awareness of the onlooker, is a masterly invention—both in concept and design.

The human perspective of the folk could better realise the intensity of Arjuna's Penance if the popular story of the cat, which deceived the mice, could be offered as a contrast to the hero's yoga.

The meekness and piety of the cat, the wonder of the mice and the crowding of forms on the right hand side, evidence to an expressionism which is unique in the whole history of Indian sculpture.

Mahendravarman had serious misgivings about the lower depths to which both



Tantric Hinduism and Buddhism had sunk in his time. But he was allied to the more exalted impulses of both the faiths.

The concept of the world as the dream of reality, with the constant flux of life through Karma, dominated his consciousness.



Elephants

The great breadth, length and the tremendous contours of the rock were elephantine. Also the elephant, the great noble beast, was the main vehicle for war, glorious processions and the daily tasks of fetching and carrying, in the early centuries.

The concrete and universal, therefore, coincided in the need to scoop out giant elephants.

There are other elephants in Indian sculptures. The one in Bhaja, in the Abbot's Cave, is on a miniature scale. Here in

Mahabalipuram, the elephant is carved at the base of the right hand side of the rock, with a love for the sculptural possibilities. The rotundity of the figure, the spiritual calm of the physical mass, the nobility of this nearly divine manifestation, gives coherence to the stances and helps the lighter figures above the massive bulk. The group of male and female, adroitly presented as big and small, displays the highest talents for sculptural composition, instinct with an imaginative grasp of all the problems of modelling, with the simplicity, directness and restrained power.



Monkey family

The monkey family on a weather-beaten piece of rock, near the main rock, testifies to the sense of observation of the intimate family life of all creatures.

The exaltation of such an ordinary act of loving as the ancestor of man shows in cleaning the body of his mate, while the mother monkey feeds the little one on her breasts, shows recognition of the little things of life, making attachment to the world, and its small graces, as important as the ultimate devotion of Arjuna himself. The curious homecoming of human beings, from the temples of worship, shows that Mahendravarman and his craftsmen had accepted life and its sensations. Benevolent intentions apart, the king believed that human beings could help themselves.

MAMALLAPURAM

Introduction

Mamallapuram, or Mahabalipuram, as it is popularly called, picturesquely situated close to the sea, about 35 miles south of Madras, is rich in its artistic wealth, affording endless scope for the study of ancient architecture and sculpture in the Tamil country. Occupying as it does an important place among the classical monuments of India, the monolithic Rathas and cave temples at Mahabalipuram attract visitors from far and near. It was a famous seaport even from the beginning of the Christian era. In the *Periplus* of the Erythraean sea by a Roman navigator of the first century A.D., it is referred to along with *Poduke* (modern Pondicherry) as a port north of the Kaveri. Ptolemy, a Roman geographer of the second century A.D. called it *Malange*. Tirumangai Alvar of the 8th century A.D., who was contemporaneous with Nandivarman Pallavamalla (A.D. 732-796), calls it *Kadal Mallai* and describes its harbour with its large anchored ships laden with treasure, elephants and gems. As *Mallai* it was the birth place of Bhutattalvar, one of the early trio of illustrious Alvars. Mahabalipuram is in no way connected with Mahabali, but is only derived from Mamallapuram, the city of the *Mallas* and of Mamalla, a title of Narasimhavarman I (A.D. 630-668), the great Pallava ruler of the seventh century A.D., who was responsible for most of the rock-cut temples and carvings of this place.

The local monuments can be grouped, according to their methods of construction as: 1) Cut-out Monoliths, *i.e.* free-standing temples cut out of solid rock, most of which are locally styled *Rathas*, 2) Cut-in caves, excavated in hill-scarps and used as temples, these being in some cases called *Mandapas*, 3) Temples, the term being used here to denote built-up masonry or structural temples, and 4) Sculptured scenes and reliefs carved on the hill edges. They illustrate all the styles of Pallava architecture and plastic art, though the majority belong to the period of Narasimhavarman I. The Pallavas, who ruled from the 3rd century A.D. to 8th century A.D., with their capital at Kanchipuram, with Mamallapuram as their sea-port, were a sea-faring people who spread Hindu culture in the Indian Archipelago, where the early inscriptions are written in the Pallava-Grantha script. The sculptures show affinity with South Indian Pallava sculptures. At the beginning of the Christian Era Mamallapuram was known to the Egyptian-Greek sailors. To Mamalla (*i.e.*, Narasimhavarman I) most of the monuments at Mamallapuram are attributed. Manavarman, the refugee-king of Ceylon helped him in his victorious attack on Badami and in the encounter with Pulakesin II. To help Manavarman to regain his throne in Ceylon, Mamalla fitted out a large fleet that sailed from the Port of Mamallapuram to Lanka. The builder of the Shore-temple, which is a structural temple like the famous Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, was Narasimhavarman II *alias* Rajasimha (A.D. 700-728) who is said to have sent an embassy from the port of Mamallapuram to the Chinese Emperor.

Origins and Materials

The advent of the Pallavas witnessed the conversion of contemporary brick-timber-metal architecture of the *Tamil Nad* into permanent rock, or to speak correctly, stone. They were pioneers in tackling hard and less tractable rocks such as granite, gneiss and charnockite in the excavation of cave temples and the carving of their monoliths (*rathas*). Their contemporaries, the Chalukyas, who were ruling at Badami and whose important king, Pulakesin II, the conqueror of Harshavardhana, was subdued by Pallava Narasimhavarmarman *alias* Mamalla (A.D. 630-668), chose for their temples, on the contrary, softer rocks.

This has given rise to problems and puzzles regarding the choice of the stone—softer rocks by the Chalukyas and harder rocks by the Pallavas. While it is easy to see that the Chalukyan choice was intentional because of the facility not only of quarrying but also of carving fine reliefs and designs, the Pallava choice is inexplicable.

At Ajanta, Aurangabad, Karle, Bhaja, and Nasik, the choice of trap formation by the authors of earlier rock-cut architecture in Western India, in Deccan, is noticed in the Buddhist *chaityas* and *viharas* raised. The same is noticeable in Ellora and Elephanta. The compact and fine-grained sandstones at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal, the centre of the Early Chalukyas, gave room to the colossal and fine creations of the Chalukyan dynasty. Sandstone hills of Udayagiri, near Vidisa, encouraged, the earlier Gupta workmen to excavate cave temples there. At Sankaram, and Guntupalle in Andhra and Khandagiri, Udayagiri in Orissa, caves are cut into coarse sandstone hills.

The choice of sandstone for sculptural work and for making columns, *toranas* and umbrellas started with the Mauryas.

In the succeeding epochs both sandstone and trap formations were employed in rock architecture and sculpture in different parts of the country.

In the Krishna valley, however, local marble-like limestone was utilised in the stupas of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda.

The successors of the early Chalukyas in Deccan and Mysore continued the use of sandstone, and, subsequently, soft schist, including chlorite, steatite, soap-stone, in short, more fine-grained compact soft materials.

In working such materials Western Chalukyas and Hoysalas excelled their predecessors both in largeness of size and technique of carving.

At Vijayawada and Guntur coarse sandstone serves as the material of the cave temples.

At Bhairavakonda in Nellore district, the material is steatite-like schist out-crop.

It was given to the genius of the Pallavas to choose the hardest of rock, granite, gneiss and charnockite. Softer rocks were absent in their area. Also they thought that the local hard rock was absolutely *new* material, not tackled by their rivals, the Chalukyas or even their predecessors, the Ikshvakus and the Satavahanas. Pallava Mahendravarman I (A.D. 580-630) initiated the use of hard rock in the South for which reason he was called a '*Vichitra-chitta*' (inventive or curious-minded).

In the whole range of rock architecture in India, similar achievements of this kind are the seven Ajivaka caves in the Barabar and Nagarjuni hills near Gaya and one in Sitamarhi near Rajagriha of the time of Asoka and his grandson Dasaratha. Large boulders of gneiss were worked with infinite labour and finished with enamel-like polish. Such a technique which included quarrying, carving and high polishing started and ended here within the same century. It was only about a thousand year later that the Pallavas started excavating into hard stone. The intermediate tradition was one of softer and often coarser rock-material where, in place of Chunar sand-stone bearing the fine Mauryan polish, the finished but rough surfaces of the wall were plastered smooth and often painted as at Ajanta, Ellora, Badami, the sculptures too being covered with painted stucco as was the use in contemporary brick structure as well. The Pallavas did not do any polishing but continued the tradition of plastering the interiors often with paintings or covering carvings with painted stucco.

Mahendra's declaration at Mandagappattu is thus significant, that, as a *Vichitra-chitta*, he was the first to make the habitation in stone for the trinity (*trimurti*) without the use of the conventional ingredients of contemporary and earlier structures in the South, that is to say, brick, timber, metal and mortar. This would, therefore, refer to his natural exultations for successfully achieving, by scooping out of the hardest of rocks, the first temple named after him than to the mere introduction



of rock-cut architecture in the south, which is *not architecture* in intent and purpose but *sculpture* on a grand and magnificent scale.

Megalithic cult

How did stone (rock) suggest itself to the Pallava king Mahendravarman I ?

The earliest surviving monuments in the South, are the megaliths reflecting a culture and tradition peculiar to the South. Being essentially post-ex-carnation burials, they are different from the earlier neolithic and later post-cremation burials. They are mostly found on sloping ground at the foot of rocky outcrops, forming the water spreads of tanks. Their associations with large stones is very characteristic, while their architectural nature and methods of construction are varied. Their large number and their ubiquity indicate generations of settled agricultural people, while their contents denote advanced material culture and reverence for the dead. By the very nature of construction, the megalithic monuments involved the efforts of the entire community. In contrast, private habitations were humble and did not endure because of their perishable nature. But their funerary structures, being of stone, have survived. In this respect they are paralleled by later great temples of enduring stone, in juxtaposition with contemporary secular structures of timber and brick, which have perished. The megalithic monuments, therefore, are eloquent proofs for veneration, devotion to the dead and belief in *post-mortem* existence in the spirit world. And this is just where the extant *Sangam* literature of the Tamils adds testimony to the megalithic cult. The *Sangam* literature echoes these funerary practices. For example, king and noble, commoner and peasant, were interred in such a manner, the cult of cremation gradually replacing it when at last such earlier practices became a memory. We have numerous references in *Sangam* works to the megalithic monuments, involving the use of stones and the urn-burial, which is one of the elements of the megalithic complex. *Sangam* literature refers to *idukadu*, the necropolis, where the dead were exposed and their remains buried and where the erections were both funerary and commemorative. Next to the references to the *tali* (originally burial but later on sarcophagus or pottery urn) we have references to *nadukal* which means "the erected stone, sepulchral and commemorative." The *Tolkappiyam* (*Sangam* Work) defines as *Katchi kalkol nirpadai nadukal sirtaku sirappin perumpadai valttal* (Parul: 2.5). In the light of our knowledge of megalithic culture, *Katchi* means the lying-in-state for sometime, while *Kalkol* means exposure of the body to the elements, as in excarnation, indicated by the megalithic monuments. *Kal* means the five elements. *Nirpadai* means the ceremonial washing of the few picked bones at a much later date and their burial. *Nadukal* means erection of the stone (megalith) over it. This was to be followed by *perumpadai*, the great offering of cooked rice and by *valttal*, that is, praise with song and dance. The custom of such worship and offering of *perumpadai* or *perumcoru* in honour or in memory of the dead, is clear from *Aham* and *Puram*. At Nagarjunakonda, memorial stones called *Chayakabha* (3rd century A.D.) have been unearthed.

Nadukal

Most significant was the conception of the dead person becoming the *Nadukal*, as *Puram* and *Pattuppattu* and *Silappadikaram* show. Stone commemorating the dead, or personifying the dead, and becoming divine is emphasised in all the *Sangam* texts. *Nedumkal ninra manram* is how *Silappadikaram* refers to a temple as an erect-stone being the object of worship.

This association of stone with the dead has continued for a long time among the Tamils, among whom there is current, even today, the adage *kalyanam* and *kalleduppu*, the former referring to wedlock and the latter to death, euphemistically as raising of the stone memorial. In fact, these two significant expressions marked the two great events in human life.

This was obviously the reason why stone was not used for building temples, sacred edifices and making of images for worship till about the 7th century A.D. In contrast to this however, stone was used in Buddhist *stupas* and *dagabas* which were primarily funerary (*dagaba* = *dhatu garbha*) in the early centuries of Christian era. This answers a vital question why religious edifices of Brahmanism are not encountered with till we come to the 7th or 8th century A.D., when they were excavated out of rock or built of stone.

Virakkal, hero-stone, reflects the same custom relating to what is called *Kannadu* bearing inscription with or without sculptures and symbols. Such hero-stones are called in early Tamil literature *Pattavankal*, *pattavan* denoting the deified hero, who died in battle or immolated himself in the pursuit of a vow.

Similarly, deification of women, who performed *sati* became a growing cult centering round *karpu* or chastity and leading to the *Pattini*-cult, which continued from the days of *Silappadikaram*. *Puram* (256) describes a wife desiring burial with her dead husband. She implores the potter to fashion the burial urn of such size as to include herself as she has been, like a little lizard, attaching itself to the chariot wheel, attaching herself to her lord in all the vicissitudes of life. *Ainkurunuru* (441) defines *karpu* and describes Arundhati as the ideal thereof. *Puram* (246) describes how *Bhuta Pandiyan's* queen



committed *sati* on her husband's funeral pyre. Relics of such *sati* practices in the third and fourth centuries A.D., showing the *sati* descending into the fire, are known from the excavations from Nagarjunakonda (Fig. 1).

Narrinai (216) describes *Tirumavunni* cutting off one of her breasts standing under the *vengai* tree (*pterocarpus*). *Pattinicheyyul* quoted in *Yapparungalam* supplies the theme to *Silappadikaram* for deifying legendary Kannaki as *Pattinikkadavul*. The fetching of a stone for such deification from the north and the identification of Kannaki with Durga or Bhagavati are common knowledge. What is called *Tolkai-kotta-kamba* in Kannada and *Masatikal* (*Mahasatikal*), with inscriptions and sculptures in relief, often show an arm bent at right angles to the elbow with the palm facing out. Sometimes a *virakkal* and *masatikal* are combined in one showing the husband and the wife who performed *sati* together at the top in heaven (*vira swarga*).

Kandu means a pillar or post planted on an altar or platform set up in the *podiyil* where resides a deity. This was also an aniconic object of worship in early times, as seen from *Aham* (287), *Puram* (52) and *Pattinappalai* (246-249). *Kandali* mentioned in the *Tolkappiyam* is the same as *Kandu*. *Manimekalai* describes the goddess residing in the *Kandu* as *Kandirpavai*. Even today we notice a stone or brick or a platform with a spear, sickle or club, planted on it under a tree to be conceived as representing a village god.

Tari

Inscribed memorial slabs of crudely dressed stones, without any sculptures on them, found in South Arcot district, are called *Tari* which are commemorative of vows called *parani* or *nonbu* performed by women. *Tari* like *kandu* means a projecting pillar or post.

Pattinappalai describes another object of worship by fishermen on the sea-shore which is the toothed rostrum of the shark or saw-fish planted on the beach worshipped with flower-offerings, song and dance. Gods and spirits residing in trees, hills, rivers, tanks, and cross-roads were worshipped as local guardians, many of which were *totem* gods, a tradition continuing in later times as *sthala-vrikshas* of temples e.g. *Tillai*.

In the time of *Manimekalai*, cremation became common and the necropolis as described in the story of *Sakkaravalakottam* contained memorial shrines of bricks built for saints, kings, and *satis* who gave up their lives along with their husbands, and for other people raised by their relatives (*Mani*. 6th Canto, 54-59). These were found along with the temple of Durga and *Nirakalterri* which are megalithic monuments and with *Kandus*, which are posts representing deities to which *balis* (offerings) were made.

Association of stone with the sacred

The claim that Pallava king Mahendravarman I (A.D. 580-630) made when he called himself a *Vichitra-chitta* was justified by more than one reason. His first cave temple, where no traditional material, brick, timber, mortar and metal was used, was in Mandagappattu for the *Tsimurti* (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva).

Subsequently, Mahendra excavated cave temples, as at Mahendravadi and Mamandur for Vishnu, and at Vallam, Dalavanur, Siyamangalam and Trichinopoly for Siva. Caves at Pallavaram, Mamandur (Cave II) were dedicated to more than one God with three or five shrine-cells.

Mahendra's simple type of cave temples continued in the time of his successors and was also adopted by contemporary Pandyas, Adigaimans and Muttaraiyars, in hard granite.

The first to start innovations was Mamalla (A.D. 630-668) with the result that we get another series of cave temples with ornate facades and pillars and also monolithic *vimanas*, popularly called *rathas*.

At Kuram and Tirukkalikunram, the first experiment in the erection of structural temples was made by Paramesvaravarman I (A.D. 672-700). They were constructed out of slabs of granite.

Rajasimha (A.D. 700-728) who followed, erected the earliest structural temples and perfected the technique, as in Mahabalipuram, Kanchi Kailasanatha temple and Panamalai Talagirisvara temple.

Though they were monoliths, the cave temples imitated the interiors of contemporary brick and timber structural temples, while the *rathas* and structural temples were stone reproductions of both the exterior and interior aspects of brick and timber temples, even to the minutest details.

It was easy for Mahendra and Mamalla to deviate from the tradition of material of construction but they could not however deviate in respect of the principal image consecrated.

In earlier and contemporary temples the object of worship was a painting on the wall, or fixed to the wall, or picked out, or moulded in stucco and painted, or of wood, carved and appropriately painted as Sangam literature proclaims (*Aham* 167, 369) and *Pattuppattu*





1

(Madurait, 11,484-85) *Ittigai nedum suvar vittam vilndena.....(Aham), sor madattu eludu ani Kadavul (Aham); Suvarpavaiyum...semisuvar punaindu(Pattupattu)*. Poygai alwar (*Divya prabandham*) supports this: *Avar avar tam tam arindavaru etti, ivar ivar ein peruman enru, suvar misai-carttiyum vaittum toluvar—ulaku alandu murti uruve mudal*.

The *Avantisundari-Katha-sara* refers to Rajahamsa's queen who offered worship to Guha in the cave temple and saw *Bhittichitra*, wall painting, playing besides his parents. Surely this refers to Somaskanda panel in the cave temple.

Even today the principal image worshipped in the *garbha-griha* is made of stucco, e.g. Srirangam and Trivandrum, or of wood, e.g. Tirukkoyilur and Attivaradar in the Varadaraja temple, Kanchipuram, which is kept inside the temple and taken out periodically.

Mahendra and Mamalla could not make their principal images in the sanctum, in stone like the bas-reliefs on wall. Therefore, the cave temples at Mamallapuram have empty shrines with traces of original painted image on the wall or with small platforms for brick and stucco images against the hind wall, or with square and rectangular depressions on the back wall of the sanctum for the insertion of carved wood plaques.

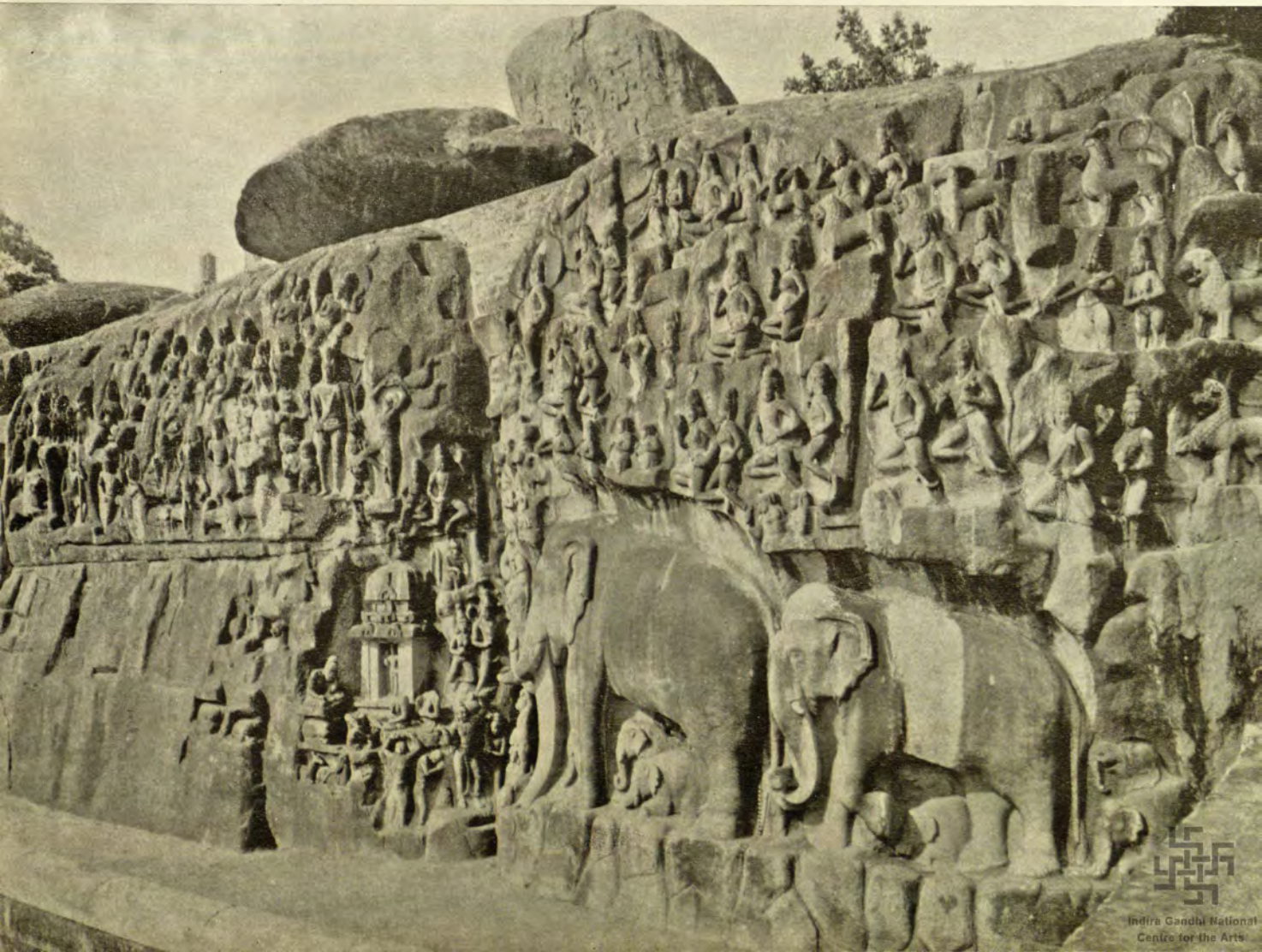
The find of a brick temple of Ashtabhujasvami in Nagarjunakonda (3rd century A.D.) and of a lime stone slab with a slot in it for inserting a wooden image confirm this.

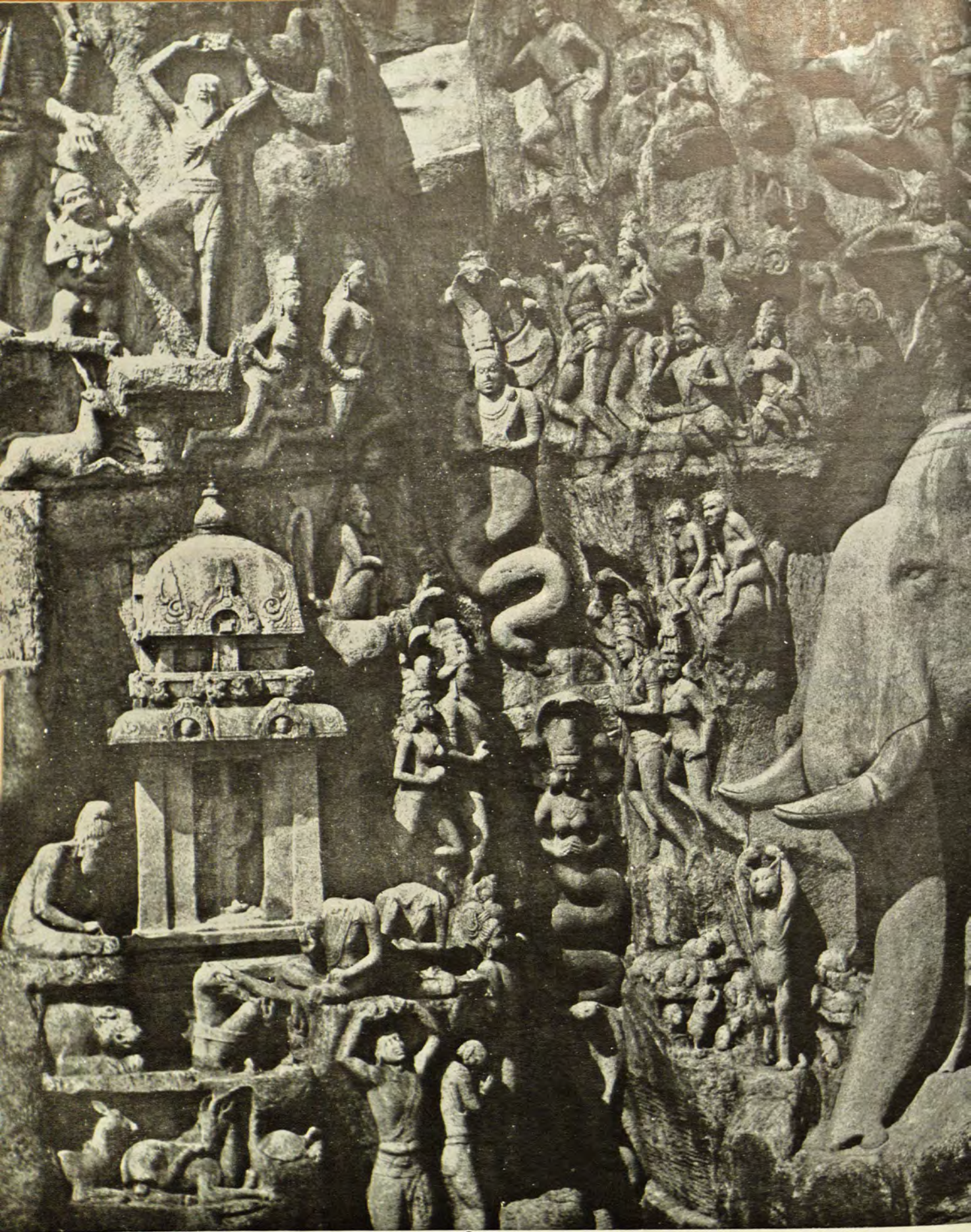
An inscription on it refers to the consecration of Ashtabhujasvami of (Audumbara) wood which is described in *silpa* and *agama* texts as the most suitable for images. Later *agama* and *silpa* texts, traditionally prescribe wood as the first material, then only others, *kadisarkara* (mortar) or paint (*chitra*) and metal, and last of all stone. Even the stone images were to be plastered and painted.

It was only in the time of Paramesvaravarman I (A.D. 672-700) that we see bas-relief-stone carved on the sanctum back walls.

Such reliefs are found in Narasimhavarman II *alias* Rajasimha's (A.D. 700-28) structural temples also.

2







1. *An Ikshvaku Queen. Nagarjunakonda, 3rd century A.D.*
2. *Arjuna's penance relief with one-fourth unfinished. Mahendra Style.*
3. *Above—Arjuna doing penance.
Siva's declaration.
Below— Badarikasrama, Nara,
Narayana, Ganga tira scenes.*
4. *Arjuna's penance relief depicts the story of the descent of the river Ganga.*
- 4a. *Arjuna's penance relief Naga mithuna.*
- 4b. *Arjuna's penance.
Nagini worshipping in Ganga.*



4a

The next was to instal slabs containing bas-reliefs or high-reliefs of the deities at the centre of the floor of the sanctum and this was followed later by stone sculptures in the round.

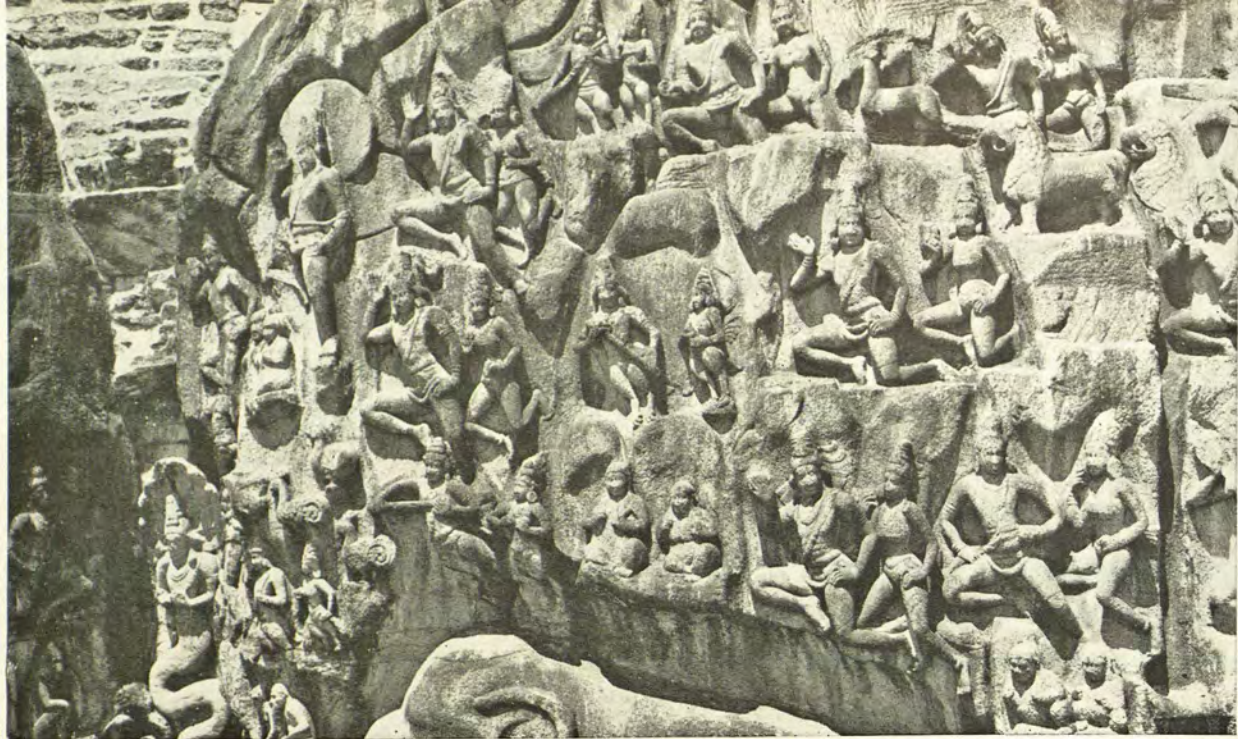
The tradition of associating stone with the funeral was so strong that people had to reconcile themselves to the use of such prohibited material for sacred purposes. The Nayanmars and the Alvars, the exponents of the strong *bhakti* movements and contemporary leaders of religious thought, visited every shrine and sang their hymns in them. But strangely enough they are silent on this question of Mahendra-Mamalla's innovation. Not even one of the rock-cut cave temples, contemporary sculptures or achitecture have been referred to by them in their hymns. Their reticence, or more perhaps their orthodoxy, is so strong that they have sung about small and architecturally insignificant temples and even gods in humbler habitations.

It is only Tirumangai Alwar, who refers to the structural temple of Vaikunthaperumal in Kanchi built by Nandivarma II, Pallavamalla (A.D. 732-96).

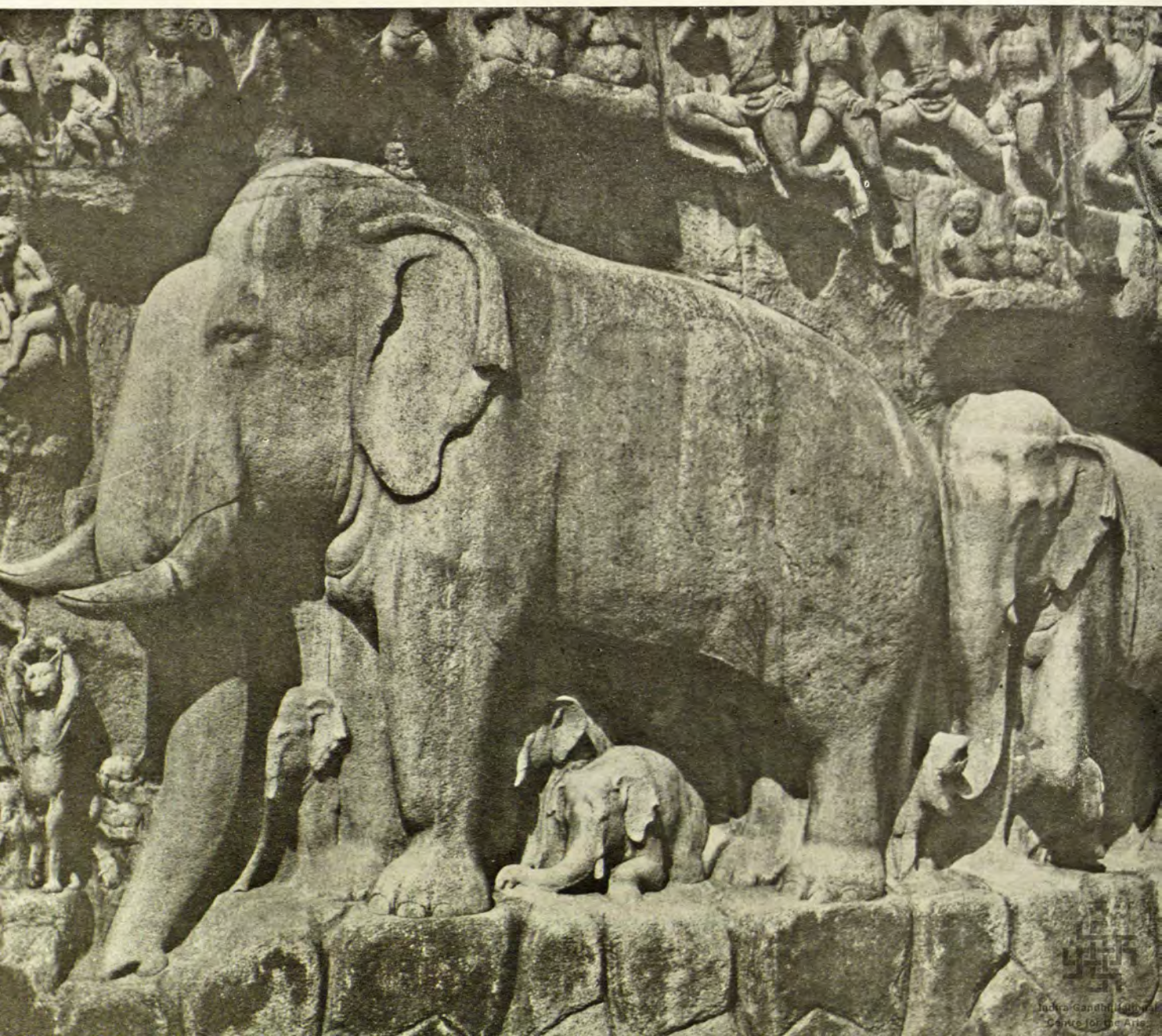
These stone temples had to wait till the Cholas became important. Side by side with memorial shrines, referred to in the *Manimekalai* shrines built of stone also became common in later Pallava and early Chola times. They are called *Pallippadai*.

The shrines in a line, outside Kailasanatha temple, at least some of them, for example, the
4b *Nitya-vinitesvara* appears to be such memorial shrines.





5



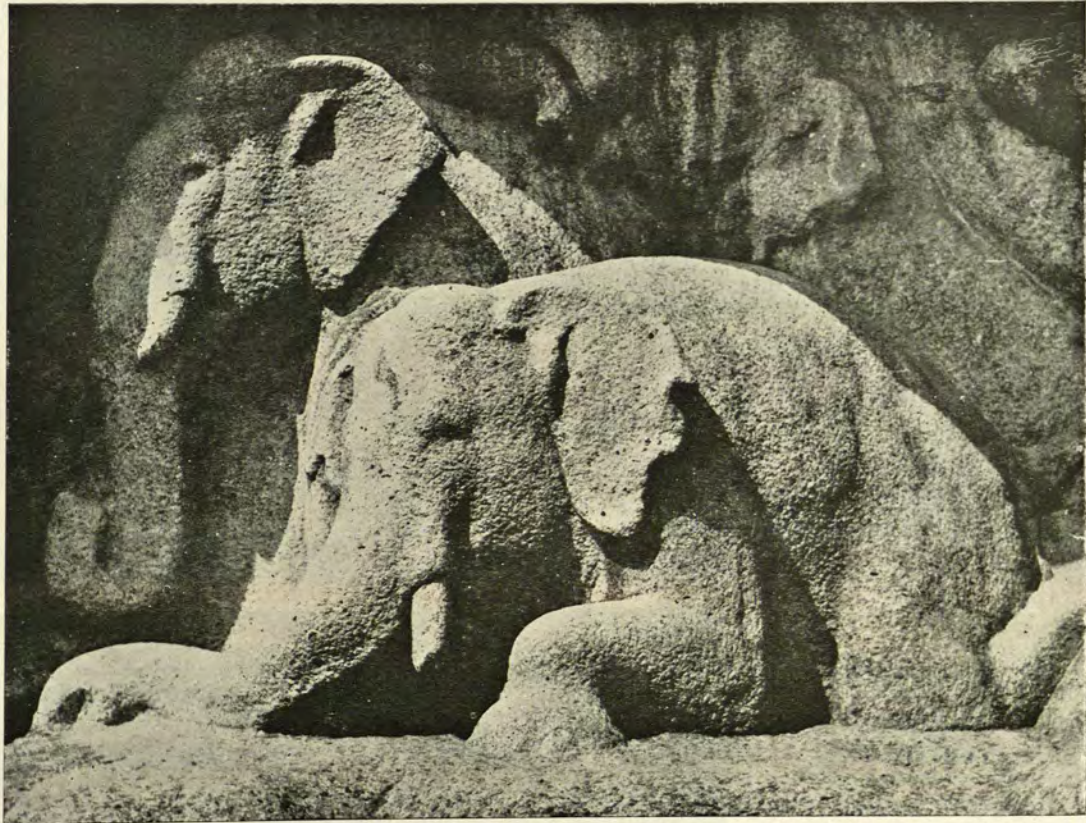


8

5. *Arjuna's penance relief.*
Right half top, showing Vidyadharas, Kinnaras, Ganas, Nagas, Surya, monkeys, lions, elephants, deer and birds.
6. *Elephant herd moving in the bog of Ganga. Arjuna's penance relief. Mahendra style.*
- 6a. *Detail of an elephant with the paw lifted.*
7. *Arjuna's penance relief.*
Elephant calves—a realistic study.
8. *The cat's mock penance on Ganga tira, Arjuna's penance relief.*



6a



7

Here we cannot help comparing this *Pallippadai* cult with the Devaraja cult of the Far-East. In short, it was over this stratum of cult, of the worship of the Great Dead, symbolised by megalithic monuments, intermixed with animistic and schamanistic concepts, that the four northern creeds of the Vedic Hindus, Jainas, Ajivakas and Baudddhas, were superimposed. Starting from at least the commencement of the Christian era, they moved in waves to South India, giving rise to not only literature, but also gradually influencing local beliefs with the result that the incoming faiths got themselves transformed in the process by their contact with the existing culture which was an advanced one (literary and material). Instead of a mere introduction, it was a process of transformation, by assimilation and identification with the local gods and beliefs.

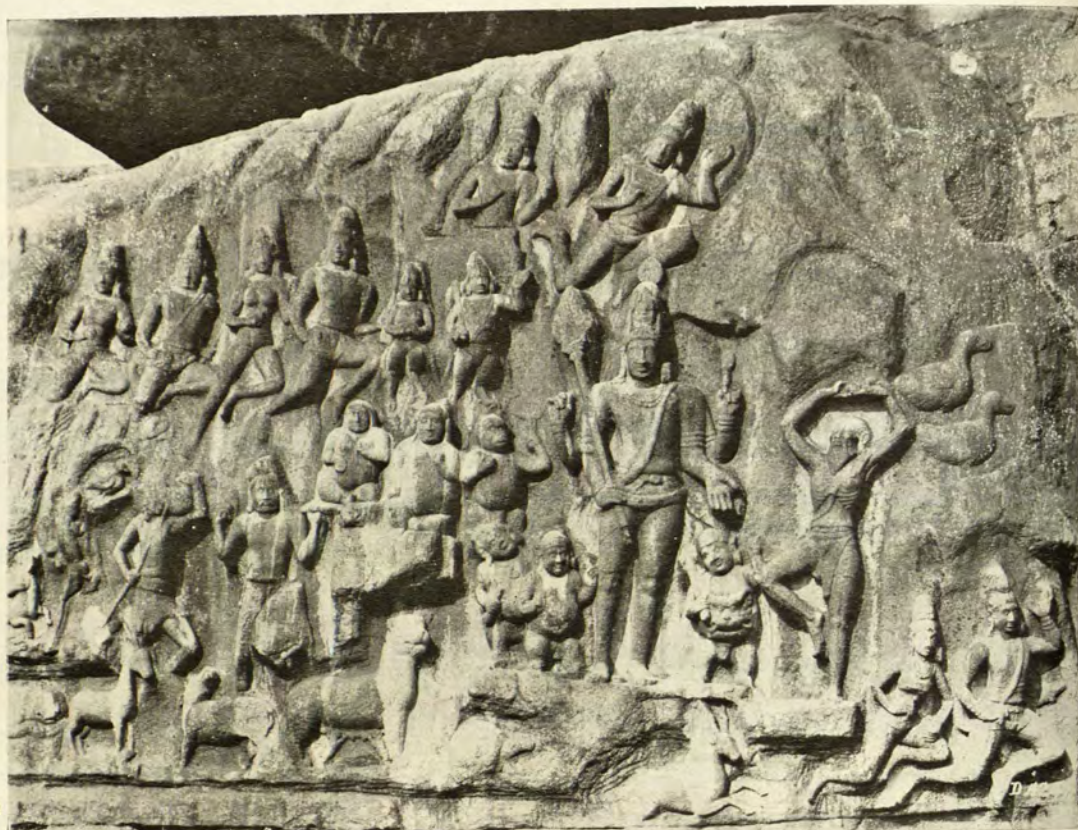
Of the Hindu impact we find in early *Sangam* literature (1st millennium A.D.), reference to Vedic ideas, sacrifices and to the Hindu gods in their new habitations, forms and qualities, mixed



9. *Left half up—Arjuna's penance relief. Siva narrating Arjuna's career and granting Pasupatastra to Arjuna. Forest scene: lions, deer, hare, birds, lizard, hunters. Ganas, Vidyadharas, Kinnaras & Chandra. Mahendra style.*
10. *Details from Arjuna's penance relief. Left half top.*

Vidyadharas, Kinnaras, Ganas and forest scene with hunters, lions, deer, hare, monkey and udumbu. Mahendra style.

- 10a. *Arjuna's penance relief. Slumbering deer below Nara in Badari tapovana. Mahendra style.*





10a

with the indigenous. In literary sources the contemporary plastic or graphic representations, are absent. We only come face to face with the syncretic forms of Mayon (Krishna), Valiyon or Nagar (Balarma,) Sevel or Neduvel (Muruga) of the Tamils, corresponding to Kartikeya-Skanda-Subramanya, Trilochana Siva, Durga called Korraivai, Aiyai, Kaduraikkadavul and Kan-amarselvi, Vendan (Indra), Varuna, Brahma the creator, and Adisesha. It is in this set up and in the strong cult-substratum that Mahendravarman I, and his successors of the Pallava dynasty, created the rocky wonder-world of Mamallapuram.

KIRATARJUNIYAM OR ARJUNA'S PENANCE

We will deal first with significant sculptured scenes and reliefs carved on the hill-edges of Mamallapuram.

A bas relief 90' x 30' and 50' high with three-fourths carved and one-fourth of its lower left end unfinished (Fig. 2) represents, in an epic form, Arjuna's penance or the 'Kirata's' feud with Arjuna', as found in the *Vana parva* of the *Mahabharata*.

Bharavi (6th century A.D.) appears to be the first Sanskrit poet to use this theme for drawing up his *Kiratarjuniyam*. Though Kalidasa knew this story, it is curious that he was not attracted by the theme. This story was popular under the Guptas and found its due share along with *Kumara Sambhava*, on pillars from Chandimau in Bihar of the Gupta period. Hence the story was also popular under the Guptas, though Kalidasa did not utilise it, and Bharavi, who followed, filled up this want and gave us the *Kiratarjuniyam*, an immortal poem which opened, as it were, the floodgates of contemporaneous sculpture. Anantabhatta (15th century A.D.) dealt with the same story in his *Bharata Champu* (prose and poetry) in the style of his period.

The Mahabharata version of this story, to which every other version, including Bharavi's, was indebted, is as follows:

When the Pandava brothers were in exile in *Dvaitavana*, Vyasa visited them and advised Arjuna, through Yudhishtira, to meet Indra. Arjuna went north with bow and sword with the resolve to please Indra, so that he might help him remove their disgraceful status inflicted on them by the *Kauravas*. On the *Indrakila* hill, in the Himalayan forest, where he was performing austerities, Indra came to him first as an old ascetic and asked him if *Moksha* was the end of Arjuna's *tapas*. Arjuna replied that his *tapas* was to secure weapons (*astras*) with which he could wipe off their shame by defeating the *Kauravas*. Thereupon, Indra revealed his real form and directed him to concentrate his *tapas*, on the God of all gods, Siva, and that Arjuna could have Indra's weapons thereafter. Arjuna started another penance, the severest of its kind. Clad in *valkala*, and wearing deer skin, he stood on one foot, on the tip of the toe of one foot, with his arms raised over his head, and the palms inter-locked, leaving a loophole for him to gaze at the burning sun above. Starvation reduced him to a skeleton and the beard and shaggy hair gave him the appearance of "Surya surrounded by rays."

The sages of the forest were perturbed by his penance, as, heated with his *tapas*, the surrounding earth was emitting smoke. They could not understand why a *vira* like Arjuna should do penance which was clearly a *munivritti*. They went to Mahadeva and requested him to put an end to Arjuna's *tapas*.

Siva assured them that Arjuna desired no kingdom or heaven or wealth or long life and that he alone knew the boon that Arjuna wanted, and that he would soon think of granting this boon. As soon as the sages departed with this assurance, Siva, accompanied by Uma, both dressed as hunters and followed by goblins (*ganas*) in a variety of guises, reached the place where Arjuna stood in penance. Suddenly, the sounds of water-falls, animals and birds ceased and silence pervaded the forest. They saw a *danava*, called Muka, in the form of a wild boar, disturbing Arjuna's penance and rushing at his emaciated figure. Arjuna had his doubt for a second, if he could take to arms in the midst of a *vrata*, and, consoling himself, that one can kill in self-defence, more so as the *danava* wanted to kill him when he had done him no harm, he got ready to shoot the boar with an arrow. Just then Siva appeared



11

11. Arjuna's penance relief. Vidyadharas, Kinnaras singing, hunters, and lion springing from its lair. Mahendra style.

12. Right half top of Arjuna's penance relief with singing Kinnaras, Vidyadharas, Siddhas, Sadhyas, Ganas, deer and lions with tails in loop. Mahendra style.



12

before him as the *Kirata*, pointed out to him the procedure in the law of hunt and asked Arjuna to desist as he had marked the animal out for his own arrow-shot even before Arjuna noticed it. Arjuna turned a deaf ear to the *kirata*'s sermon on hunt and shot his arrow. At the same time the *kirata* also shot. The boar fell dead, after revealing, its real form of Asura.

Thereupon, an interesting, wordy as well as physical duel ensued between the *kirata* and Arjuna. Arjuna sneered at the *kirata* accompanied by a woman and asked him if he was not afraid of the forest. The *kirata* answered that there was no question of fear for forest-dwellers, which they were. In return, he asked why Arjuna was roaming about alone in the forest. Arjuna gave him his characteristic answer that, his *gandiva* and arrows were always there to protect him. Then accusing the *kirata* of breach of the rules of hunt, in that he had shot the boar which was attacking him (*Arjuna*) he challenged the *kirata* to answer such conduct with his life. The *kirata* levelled a counter accusation as:

"I was after the boar which was my game. It was killed by my arrow. You take away my game, accuse me of taking away your game, yet talk of rules and want me to answer with my life. So be it. I shall end your life".

Arjuna was angry and all the arrows that he shot the *kirata* caught with ease. Thereupon Arjuna cried, "Who are you—Deva, Yaksha, Sura, Asura or Rudra? Now let me see how you can stand the arrows from my *Gandiva* which only Siva can withstand." Arjuna shot his arrows and they were caught by Siva. Arjuna's stock was depleted. Deprived of arrows Arjuna smote the *kirata* with the bow. On the *kirata* snatching away the bow, Arjuna attacked with the sword, but Arjuna's luck was out and his sword broke. Arjuna threw stones, trees and missiles at the *kirata*, who, catching them easily, proved more than a match to Arjuna. The last stage in the duel was to wrestle with the fists. The two wrestled till Arjuna fell unconscious and bleeding. Recovering consciousness Arjuna was overwhelmed with sorrow at his defeat and it flashed to his mind that his foe was not a mortal. Immediately he made a clay altar of Siva and began to worship with flowers Bhava (Siva). All these flowers that he put on the clay altar of Siva he found moving to the head of the *Kirata*. Arjuna forthwith fell at the *Kirata*'s feet and begged his pardon for *Sivaparadha* and the fight he gave him out of ignorance, not knowing that the very God for whose blessings he was performing penance was before him to bless him. Siva was pleased and revealed his form with Parvati as *Kailasanatha*, assuring Arjuna: "In your former life you were a great sage, Nara, the friend of Narayana. I give you godly eyes now to behold me". Arjuna poured out his heart in *stotras*, in praise of Mahadeva, who gave him the weapon he desired, *Pasupatastra*, and vanished. Soon after, other devas, Indra and other *dikpalas* visited Arjuna and gave him their own weapons.

Now that we know the earliest version of the story from the *Mahabharata*, it will be easy to examine Bharavi's version and study in its light this bas-relief.

Mahakavi Bharavi, author of *Kiratarjuniyam*, flourished sometime in the first half of the 7th century A. D. as proved by the Aihole inscription of Chalukya Pulakesin II, which classed him with Kalidasa. Dandin, author of *Kavyadarsa*, was an younger contemporary of Bana, who flourished in Harshavardhana's court (of Kanauj), and Bana was a younger contemporary of Bharavi.

Two Sanskrit manuscripts that treat of contemporaneous Eastern Chalukya, Ganga and Pallava history, namely, *Avantisundari-katha* in prose and *Avantisundari-kathasara* in verse, throw fresh light on the wide-spread popularity of Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniyam*. *Avantisundari-katha* is by Dandi who gives his ancestry in which Bharavi finds a place.

The relevant historical facts are: that one Damodara was born to a brahmin Narayana, who migrated to Achalapura (modern Elichpore). Vishnuvardhana of the Chalukya family was then the Yuvaraja and Bharavi was his friend. Bharavi and Damodara were also friends. Through Bharavi, Damodara established friendship with the Yuvaraja. Damodara used to accompany Vishnuvardhana in the latter's hunts, in one of which he was forced to eat meat with his royal friend, for which he was so ashamed that he went out on a pilgrimage of expiation (*prayaschitta*). While on pilgrimage, destiny brought him into contact with Yuvaraja Durvinita of the Western Ganga line, who was exiled by his father. Durvinita was of a similar poetic bent of mind. Damodara and Durvinita became friends. Durvinita is known to have written a commentary on Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniyam* (15th sarga). Damodara's fame reaching the ears of the Pallava King Simhavishnu of Kanchi, the father of Mahendravarman I, invited him to his court at Kanchi and treated him like his own son. Simhavishnu dying soon after, Mahendravarman came to the throne and developed into a royal artist and poet. The fact that Damodara, friend of Bharavi, migrated to the Ganga and Pallava courts, explains the vogue that, through him, Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniyam* spread all over Deccan and South India, from Aihole to Mahabalipuram and Tanjore. This explains Durvinita's tribute to Bharavi in a literary commentary and Mahendravarman's commentary on the *Kiratarjuniyam* in stone.

The narrative also tells us that Damodara had a son Manoratha by name, whose fourth son was Viradatta, to whom Dandin was born. It was already remarked that Dandin was the younger of contemporary of Bana. The narrative records that on the invitation of a great sculptor, Lalitalaya, Dandin went to Mahamallapura (Mahabalipuram) to witness the skill of that sculptor, who had joined the broken hand of the image of *Anantasayana*, described to be near the sea, without there being any trace of joinery. There is a reference in this to the Shore Pagoda. Mahamallapura and the image of *Anantasayana* are referred to in his work as of common knowledge.

Why should Dandin be invited to witness the skill of the sculptor? As Dandin was the court-poet at the Pallava court and as he had the legacy of his great grandfather Damodara, who was probably associated in some form or other with the erection of temples, or the carving of sculptures at Mamallapuram, Dandin¹ as a representative of the family had probably to supply the architects and sculptors, themes from ancient myths and lore which they could translate into stone. Damodara was probably similarly engaged by Mahendravarman I. It need not surprise us then, that the first theme that suggested itself to Damodara and to the King himself was the glorious theme of his friend's *Kiratarjuniyam* which was then a classic. Spoken of by every one, it was so popular that it was commented upon by Durvinita. Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniyam* had won for him unique honour of being ranked with Kalidasa himself. Such an honour indicates that Bharavi was the poet of the day loved by Chalukya Vishnuvardhan, admired by Ganga Durvinita and treasured by King Mahendravarman I, of an equally poetic and artistic bent of mind. It need not surprise us to find the king devising means to perpetuate his friend's prize-classic. To the "Vichitrachitta", as Mahendravarman I was called, nothing but rock would suggest itself. He probably took the poet to Mamallapuram and gave him the honour of carving, in his very presence, the theme of *Kiratarjuniyam*, so that the glory that was Bharavi's could go from the word of mouth to permanent stone.

Such then is, indeed, the explanation of this carving at Mamallapuram. The authorship of this can certainly go to Mahendravarman I rather than to his son Mamalla I, in the absence of evidence pointing towards the latter, and in the light of the interpretation given above. This receives confirmation, if any confirmation is needed, from the presence of portraits of Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman I in the Adivaraha cave. We notice today that the left arm and figure of Seshasayana are broken. This was probably the hand that was once damaged and repaired. The portion repaired probably gave way later on and the hand assumed the present shape. It will be our endeavour now to study the relief in the light of Bharavi's poem.

A rocky fissure has been turned into a natural causeway such as would suggest a river course and the right half of the relief is filled up with beholders, participants and applauders of the grand event, the event in the present case being Arjuna's penance, victory and reward. This event was witnessed by the whole creation of the Lord of the three worlds. How has the sculptor achieved this miracle, viz., showing the three worlds in one relief?

On a bas-relief, 90' long and 50' high we notice a method of carving which for reasons unknown, has one-fourth of its lower left end unfinished (Fig. 2).

The method of carving can be briefly explained as below.

To begin with, the surface of the rock was given a vertical slope. Then the area required for the facade was deeply marked out horizontally and vertically by bold lines, which, by intersecting at regular intervals, formed a number of cubes arranged in rows. The cubes were about two feet square maximum.

Such a scraping of the rock surface into cubes is a well-known design in Indian sculpture. Sculptors will appreciate this method, as with this method, not only the rock is made easier to work, but the lines, both horizontal and vertical drawn on it, also serve as a rough guide to the proposed dimensions. The details of carving were then indicated in outline.

The work of chipping and chiselling the rock followed, till sufficient rock had been removed and scraped to fit into the intended space the outlined carving. In other words, the sculptor's design acquires a three-dimensional background and the outline is brought into relief. Thus the whole comes to be called a bas-relief.

Longhurst, Hultzsch and other writers on Mahabalipuram have thought that these rock sculptures were perhaps the works of artisans and architects recruited from North of India. Though there is no justification for suggesting a northern influence, they were led to such an inference by the find of an inscription in the northern alphabet, Nagari, in the *Atiranachandesvaralaya* at Saluvankuppam. The fact, however, that a few of the rock sculptures are unfinished, showing the cubes within vertical



and horizontal lines gives the lie-direct to this theory. For, they are only a rough attempt of the indigenous artist with a view to fixing by the outlined carving into relief and three-dimensional background. The occurrence of the northern script which is only in one case and in an inscription of a late date (A. D. 700-28), is only to make an inscription in the southern script of the same subject-matter known to visitors to the monuments from North India.

For example, let us take bi-lingual labels provided today for monuments. It is only an attempt to enable foreigners to understand our monuments. Similarly the contents of an inscription in the local script was attempted to be conveyed to North Indian visitors, by a transliteration of it in the North Indian script. Nothing more. The theory of North Indian influence is a speculation. Instead of imagining North Indian influence, we may account for such a phenomenon by presuming the anxiety of the royal designer to depict scenes and events of common interest to the local people, as well as visitors from outside. To the latter, this scenes and events including music, both vocal and orchestral, were provided as the adjoining Tiger Cave proves.

Yet another possibility is that the best artists were requisitioned from the then best-known centres of art and culture. For example, the *Tapovana* scene, in this panel, has drawn for the larger part of its sculptural content from the Gupta relief of Nara Narayana at Deogarh².

Before we consider the intent-value (*dhvani*) of this bas-relief let us appraise its content-value (*vacakata*).

The relationship between content and intent is as much apparent in art as in literary criticism (*alankara*). The yard-stick (*mana-danda*), by which we reckon masterpieces of Indian sculpture lies in the depiction of a few sculptural details and proper arrangement of such details in a three-dimensional perspective with a scrupulous hint at their mutual relationship. In other words, the details of sculpture must be less on the quantity side but yet representative. The sculptural details must yet be on the quality side, of epic import, standing and extent.

The point may be made clear by quoting the analogy of a message delivered which one can describe as "brief like a telegram, yet exhaustive like an essay".

With this prefatory explanation it will be useful to study this particular relief. The regions portrayed (the material is rock), are, as we have remarked already, the various worlds—*bhu*, *bhuva*, *sva*, *maha*, *jana*, *tapa* and *satya*, that is to say, terrestrial, nether, ariel, stellar and celestial (Fig. 3). The depiction of this world constitutes what may be called terrestrial regions and such regions on the living rock³ comprise a wooded hill, with caves and dens for wild animals mostly lions and with magnificent elephants, rambling deer, grinning monkeys, darting rabbits, elusive squirrels, sluggish turtles, trustful rats, penitent cat, chirping birds, vainglorious cocks and peacocks, and hunters. In such regions are camouflaged wooded lowlands with a sprinkling of antelopes, gazelles, rabbits, lizards, turtles, ducks, peacocks and peahen and monkeys, a forest river, at the foot of a hill and winding its way through lowlands, creating in its flow, bogs in which are appropriately located such animals as rodents, cats and elephants.

The sculptor has ingeniously located the river in a large vertical fissure (Figs. 2 & 3), which separates the two halves of an already split rock, leaving the major or important scenes on the left half. The care that the sculptor has bestowed to enforce the idea that it is a river can be appreciated when we examine the water spirits such as *nagas* and *naginis* that crowd its flanks. (Figs. 4a & b). Incidentally, the sculptor is anxious that we should not forget that *nagas* are both anthropomorphic and reptile. With this purpose he has crowded the river flanks with couples of *nagas* and *naginis*. He has also shown at the bottom of the fissure a *naga* in its reptile form as emerging from the nether region (Fig. 3).

The *naga* couples of male and female on either bank of the river, bring out the idea of the nether region. Thus the terrestrial region itself has been designed to include the nether region. (Fig. 3). And what was an accidental fissure in the rock has been advantageously and thoughtfully designed to create the impression in the mind of the spectator of river (water) and the nether region.

Swans, peacocks on the right side of the river and geese on the left high up, monkeys with long tails, similarly squatting on the opposite side and in the same line, one of them, the male, sitting on its haunches with tail lifted up and a look of self-confidence, eyeing a monkey couple watching it meekly from the opposite bank, and an elephant herd under the leadership of a huge tusker moving towards the river on the right bottom, represent common scenes of great associative value to a river-side (Fig. 3). Two elephants of proper proportions, the largest 17' x 14' and the smaller 11' x 10' (Fig. 6), with a number of cubs below them and behind following them help to

bring out the grandeur of the elephant-world, when a herd is marching and particularly passing through a bog to reach the river. Indeed, the elephant study is remarkable and brings out the artists' skill in delineating animal life in its natural environment. That elephants are fond of sporting in water, is a well-known theme of poets and artists. (Compare elephant sport in water at Sanchi and Raninur cave of the 2nd century B. C.) In front of the big elephant, and at the water edge, stands a penitent cat in *urdhva-bahu* pose like Arjuna, standing on its hind legs with its fore paws raised above its head in seeming imitation of the penitent Arjuna, while trustful mice play at its feet, some of them worshipping it (Fig. 8). The penance of the cat standing on one leg exactly as Arjuna does in the relief is a kind of antithesis to the subject, while, at the same time, it serves to tell us the name of the river whose water-side is the cat's resort. At the same time, by introducing the cat, the sculptor ingeniously narrates to us a story in the same way as Siva standing in front of penitent Arjuna narrates to us in retrospect, the story of Nara, or to speak correctly the career of Arjuna in his previous existence as Nara, by the side of Narayana in *Badarikasrama* (Fig. 9).

It will now be easy to appreciate how the sculptor lets in a sub-story within another story retrospectively. The story of the cat is as much part of the *retrospect* as is the story of Nara.

The cat reminds us of the rich store of stories in Hindu mythology in which hypocritical, feeble and old cats named Dadhikarna, Tamrachuda, Tiksnadamstra pretended penitence on the bank of river Ganga to delude innocent mice into their reach. Dadhikarna's feigned penance which was to allure unsuspecting hare and sparrow into his reach was performed on an islet in Ganga. The cat is described in the fable as standing with one eye closed and the other open, with the arms raised and turned towards the sun, the very pose in which we find it depicted in the sculpture. But here we find mice around it, and this circumstance can be explained by reference to the story of the penitent cat as recorded in the *Mahabharata* (*Mahabharata: Udyogaparva*, 160—vv. 11-41). This story is recorded as the message of Uluka (*Urukadautyā*). Before the battle of Kurukshetra commenced, Duryodhana summoned Uluka, the son of his uncle Sakuni, and asked him to cross over the battlefield to the other side, where, pointing to the tent of Dharmaputra, asked Uluka to communicate as from him the following message to Dharmaputra. This was on the very first day before the battle commenced. "Once upon a time when the river Ganga was flowing in its majesty, an old cat enfeebled by old age was racking its brains to get its food especially as, in its slow motion, it failed to catch its prey (mice). Casting its eye on human ascetics on the river banks, doing penance while the sympathetic world threw fruits and the like for the ascetics to feed, it got a brain-wave and started doing penance or feigned penance in imitation of the human ascetics. He stood on one leg and with uplifted arms looked at the sun, and so on. After a while the mice that were watching with suspicious eyes, the antiques of the mock-ascetic cat approached the cat slowly, with diffidence, as they were not sure that the cat, their sworn enemy, had given up its carnivorous mice-eating habits. The old cat assured them that it had given up that trait and had taken to the ascetic life, fasting and the like, as human ascetics were wont to, to obtain *moksha*. A few brave rats went near the cat and the cat was silent. Thus assured, all the rats both young and old, approached the cat and started playing hide and seek at its feet (Fig. 8). Some of the mice who felt sympathetic and called the cat their *mama* offered by turns to guide the cat to the water-side for its ablutions. The cat, who could not get over its hunger, seized upon the rats that came to it in turn and gulped them. This happened everyday and the innocent mice did not notice it, until one day they took stock of their kith and kin and found the number very much diminished. They took counsel among themselves till one fat rat suggested that they might examine its excreta without the knowledge of the cat. No sooner was it suggested than action was taken by a young rat, who, to his dismay, noticed, in the cat's excreta, certain undigested parts and limbs of the rat that the cat had swallowed the previous night. This evidence was enough to convince the rat-world that 'Mama' cat was no longer their well-wisher but was the rat-swallower like the rest of its ilk. Placing themselves at a respectably safe distance, the rats pointed the finger of accusation at the still-penitent but vociferous cat, and fled shouting in one voice, 'Oh, mama Cat, you are a pretender. You have not changed your carnivorous habits!' Not a single art-soul was there to speak to the disconsolate cat. O Uluka! narrate this story completely without missing any detail to yonder Yudhishtira, the mock-ascetic who talks *dharma* and practises *adharma*. Tell him from me that the cat of the story is today none else than your goodself. So says Duryodhana". This message was duly imparted to Yudhishtira.

With this story in his mind the sculptor solves his problem of showing river Ganga. What would have passed as just a rocky fissure in this rock-relief has acquired significance, thanks to the ingenuity of the Indian sculptor in that scene of the penitent cat with trustful mice playing at its feet serves as a kind of label to the river, in the present case river Ganga.

River Ganga receives her dominant place in this sculpture as the river that lashed the foot of the rock on which Arjuna was doing penance, and, also as the connecting link between the *Badarikasrama* episode and the *Indrakila* episode. While Bharavi, the author of *Kiratarjuniyam*, tells us that it was at the foot of the *Indrakila* hill where Arjuna was doing penance, flowed river Ganga, the

Badarikasrama where Nara and Narayana performed penance long ago, was located on the bank of river Ganga. With unequalled skill the sculptor has associated both the scenes with one common element, viz., a river, perennial river Ganga which flowed through the ages. In other words, Ganga has acquired in the hands of the sculptor the role of connecting link between Badarivana and Indrakila episodes. This has been ably achieved by a zig-zag horizontal cut in the rock below where Arjuna stands, with the result that it carries the partition between the two scenes that took place at different times in such a way that all that we find on this side (right) of it belongs to the left scene as well and helps us to understand the latter in its correct perspective. In sculptural language the two are juxtaposed, the *perspective* on the left, and the *retrospective* on the right.

Local tradition, as recorded by several writers on Mahabalipuram, is that the cat is performing penance after eating part of Krishna's butter-ball, a huge rock placed over the Arjuna's penance relief in order that the sea in front of it (the relief is overlooking the Bay of Bengal) may dry up and it may be possible for the cat to have an endless supply of food in the shape of fish exposed in addition to the mice already in its power⁴. But as we have already remarked, the sculptor in showing the penitent cat is not only entertaining the spectator by providing *hasya* (humour) as in a drama, but is also bringing out the idea of river Ganga. And the importance of Ganga lies in the fact that she served as the background in both the stories and now gives the sculptor the means that he was seeking to connect the two together. Thus Ananda Coomaraswamy, Rodin, Dubreuil, Goloubew and such other distinguished writers were right when they took the river to be Ganga, but denied its association with Arjuna on the ground that Bhagiratha, also a penitent, was responsible for *Gangavatarana*, for the beatitude of his ancestors; therefore suggesting that the scene related to Ganga's descent as a result of Bhagiratha's penance.

Against the Bhagiratha theory and in support of the identification as Arjuna's penance, the following points may be cited:

(1) The bowing and emaciated seated figure in front of the Vishnu shrine is Nara, who later becomes Arjuna (Fig. 3).

(2) The God within the shrine is Achyuta, or Vishnu as Krishna, whose *amsa* was Nara, and with whom, in his aspect as Arjuna, he was associated in the *Dvapara yuga*. The portrayal of Bhagiratha in front of Krishna, or, for that matter, of any form of Vishnu is not appropriate. How then did Ananda Coomaraswamy identify the God as Siva? It was only his wish to prove his Bhagiratha theory. The God is clearly Vishnu, with whom Bhagiratha was not at all concerned in his attempt of *Gangavatarana*.

It is worthwhile examining and comparing, for a while, details occurring in the Nara-Narayana relief of Deogarh with those of Mahabalipuram, particularly helpful for the identification of Nara with Arjuna and Narayana with Vishnu. Narayana of Deogarh has four arms and is below the *Badari* tree whose branches are bent and arranged to resemble a *sikhara* or dome shape. Achyuta (Vishnu) here has four arms and within a shrine provided with a *sikhara* of the *Dravida* type. Actually it is a *balalaya* (Fig. 3) or miniature shrine, the purpose of which is to attach to the enshrined God all the grandeur of God-headship. The God is standing, wears a *pitambara*, has four hands, the top upper hands with conch and discus, the lower left hand resting on hip (*Katyavalambita*), and the lower right suggesting protection, surely iconographic paraphernalia associated with Vishnu. Both Nara and Narayana are in one line though both are seated and the line is horizontal. And here Arjuna and Krishna (Vishnu) are in one line, but the line is vertical and the two are standing in that line. Nara in Deogarh has his hair in a top-knot, so is Nara in Mahabalipuram. The emaciated *yogi* sitting on a rocky *pitha* before the shrine, with a forward bend, is no other than Nara. In both, his hair is in a top-knot, his ear-lobes are distended and, in both, the sculptor has taken care to seat him on the same level as Krishna (Vishnu) standing within the shrine. He has also shown a crouching lion below the *pitha* in both the places. *Mahabharata* explains this feature as 'pithayos-copavistau tau' (Santi-344, 44). The crouching lion stands in both places for the wild animals sent by Indra but subdued by the atmosphere of *Badarivana* and Narayana's personality. Even recumbent deer in an attitude of comfort and ease are not forgotten (Fig. 3). At Deogarh they are below Narayana in front of him. Here they are, of course, in front of him, but below the crouching lion under Nara's seat. In a sense they are in front of Krishna (Vishnu) but not in his immediate front as in Deogarh, for the obvious reason that there are three ascetics with their heads unfortunately mutilated by accident, or by vandals, occupying all the available space in front of Krishna. Yet one of the pair of deer is in correct alignment with Krishna and can, therefore, be said to be in front.

Several interpretations of the three mutilated figures have been attempted by earlier writers.

One is that, together with the emaciated Yogi, whom we have identified as Nara, they form a group of four representing Brahma's *putras*, viz., Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara, the four permanent inhabitants of Vaikuntha. The four persons further below engaged in their

ablutions near the water side (Figs. 13, 15), one in *sandhya-vandana* doing *suryopasthana* or beholding the sun through his finger-inlets, another in *anjali-vandana*, a third in fetching water in a *purna kalasa* (*Kudam*) and a fourth as wringing his wet upper cloth are also supposed, by these writers to be the four *Kumaras*, *Sanaka* etc., now engaged in their daily routine of ablutions. After this routine they are supposed to enter *Vaikuntha*, seat themselves in front of *Vishnu* and sing in praise of *Vishnu*. This identification cannot stand, as the description given in the *Bhagavata* is that they are ever like boys of five or six years age roaming naked⁵. We may remember how they were denied admission into *Vishnu's* abode by *Jaya* and *Vijaya*, and how they retaliated by cursing the guardians to be born in three successive generations as demons. Their nudity and appearance like children which led *Jaya* and *Vijaya* to refuse admission are not in evidence in this sculpture, where the figures are shown as grown-up dressed men.

Another interpretation hazarded by the earlier writers is that the emaciated *yogi* is *Dronacharya*, and the three seated persons (headless) in front of him, are his disciples, who learnt archery from him. There is nothing to be said in favour of this view. The very seated pose of the so-called *sishtyas* in front of a *Vishnu* shrine, one of the *sishtyas*, the rear-most sitting in front of the so-called *Drona* showing his back to his *acarya*, which, according to the Hindu canons of behaviour, is a mark of disrespect to his *Guru*, and with his legs secured by a *yoga-band*, which is a necessary corollary of meditation, goes against such an identification.

Yet another view put forth by a school of writers describes the figure in front of the *Vishnu* shrine, as of *King Bali* holding his *darbar* attended by warriors, *rajas* and several wild animals, and that all that is represented below the zig-zag line under *Arjuna's* feet is *Patala-loka*, or the nether world, to which he was despatched by *Vamana* in the role of *Trivikrama*, to hold sway in the nether world, and that, in the middle of the same rock, is shown *Vasuki*, the serpent-king as a dragon under a canopy, and that the other figures are his daughters, *Ulupi* seated below him and another a reptile, just a penitent. Before we deal with this theory it is worthwhile noting what *Fergusson*, the author of 'Tree and Serpent Worship' and one of the very early writers on this subject of the 19th century A.D. has to say. The loose figures of a *Naga* and a *Nagini* fixed in the centre of the fissure (Fig. 3) led *Fergusson* to believe that the whole scene related to *Naga* worship and that the spirit of the sculptor was to emphasise the dread of mortals and their worship of snakes either for progeny or for removal of obstacles. Such an identification is what would suggest easily to the Indian mind. But such a view cannot stand as the *naga* figures and the *nagini*, all of them, have their hands folded in adoration, (Figs. 4a and b) the *nagas* against their chest and the *naginis* below their breasts, as though they are all out to worship someone than be worshipped. At any rate, that is the message they want to impart to the spectator. It will now be easy to examine the *King Bali*-theory. How did the *King Bali*-theory get into their minds at all? The answer is the name *Mahabalipuram*. They were lured by the modern name of the village *Mahabalipuram* into conjuring up the story of *Bali*. The name *Mahabalipuram* is modern and tenaciously prevails as most modern corrupt names do (cf. *Barber's Bridge*, *Chintadripet*, which are localities in *Madras*). Its correct name is *Mamallapuram*, so named after the tribal people *Mallaiyar* and the *Pallava* king *Narasimhavarman I* whose surname was *Mamalla*.

In this context, its other popular name *Seven Pagodas* deserves consideration. How did this *Seven Pagodas* name arise? It owes this name to English mariners sailing along the *Coromandel* coast to whom the monuments of *Mahabalipuram* were visible from their boats. Other instances are the *Black Pagoda*, by which they named the *Konarka* temple and the *White Pagoda* by which they hailed the *Jagannatha* temple of *Puri*. We must also remember that *Mahabalipuram* was a naval base of the *Pallava* kings and was famous as *Mallai*, *Kadanmallai* and *Mallapuri* in the time of *Vaishnava* alwars, particularly *Bhutattalwar* and *Tirumangai Alwar* (7th century A.D.). In the 3rd century A.D. it was the birth place of *Bhutattalwar* and the people were called *Mallaiyar*. *Tirumangai* who called the *Pallava* King *Mallaiyarkon* refers to long thoroughfares of *Kadanmallai* and speaks of very brisk sea-borne trade at *Kadanmallai* as

"pulankolnidhiMallaik Kadanmallai Talasayanam Periya" (*Tirumoli*, 2-6-6).

"Oh mind! Go round *Talayasayanam* which is *Kadanmallai* in the harbour of which rest at anchor vessels bent to the point of breaking under the weight of wealth, rich as one's wishes, big elephants and the nine gems". *Mallai* was known to *Ptolemy* as *Malange*, to *Periplus* as *Mavilangai*. From the Chinese records we hear that the *Pallava* *Narasimhavarman II* (A.D. 700-728) sent an embassy from this port to the Chinese court. *Sewell* noticed finds at *Mahabalipuram* of Roman, Chinese and Persian coins. Yet *Fergusson* wondered why there was no trace of any city here which should have been inhabited in those days. The answer seems to be that this part of the coast was visited by a mighty tidal wave that destroyed *Mamallapuram* as was *Kaveripattinam*, *Puduke* and *Ten-Madurai*. A recent parallel event was the sea-inundation in 1864, which wiped out the sea-port of *Masulipatnam*. Yet another incident as recent as 1964 is the tidal wave of *Ramesvaram*. A very

telling evidence is afforded by the "Avantisundari-Katha-Sara" wherein poet Dandin is said to have visited, at the request of the Pallava king, at the sea-port of Mahamallapura, the God Talasayana reclining on the sea-shore of Mahamallapura

*Mahamallapure devah swairam varidhisannidhan
Aste muhurdah sanandam phanindra iva mandire || 41 ||*

It was Sekkilar, the court poet of the Chola King Kulottunga II, who, in his *Periya Puranam*, hails the place as *Madamamallai*

"Kodukondeluntiraik-kadarpavala.....mada Mamallaiye yanaiya"

—*Periya Puranam* 118

Early mariners, who examined the sea, said that there are no reefs off the Seven Pagodas coast and that there are no physical features to prevent the idea that Mamallapuram may have been one of these ports.

The *Markandeya Purana* (Cantos 81-82) is yet another early reference to the popularity of Talasayana hailed as we saw already by Tirumangai and the author of "Avantisundari Katha". The verses to the point read as :

उत्तस्थौ च जगन्नाथः तया मुक्तो जनार्दनः ।
एकार्णवे हि शयनात् ततः स ददृशे च तौ ॥
मधुकैटभौ दुरात्मानावतिवीय पराक्रमौ ॥
क्रोधरक्ते क्षणादंतु ब्रह्माणं जनितोद्यमौ ॥

and explained how Devi as Mahishasuramardini, being appealed to, rouses up her brother Vishnu from his sleep, so that, on waking up, he beholds the demons Madhu and Kaitabha about to strike.

Having settled the question of nomenclature, as Mamallapuram whose corrupt moden form is Mahabalipuram, we shall now examine the story of King Bali, which, in the view of earlier writers, was the subject represented as enacted in front of the Vishnu shrine. If we accept the King Bali theory, who is King Bali in the sculpture, as we do not find anyone in royal attire? Where are the warriors and rajahs that constituted his darbar? How can deer, lion, turtle and the like join the darbar? The idea of the nether world, to which Bali was thrust by Trivikrama's third measure is, of course, there. This idea, which is obviously suggested by the river with its total evidence of water spirits, such as *naga*, *nagini* and reptile, may be taken to stand only for a river, its inhabitants and its banks. The *naga*, *nagini* etc. are just what they are, instead of being elevated to the exalted rank of Vasuki and Ulupi. The snake is just the cobra in its characteristic pose and there is no sanction for it to be taken to be a penitent like the cat or Arjuna. The inset-effect, or what we call *retrospect*, intended by the zig-zag line below Arjuna's feet, has misled the writers to the illusion of a *patala*, King Bali, in darbar with Vasuki and Ulupi. Nagas, as water spirits, are shown in rivers and tanks as found here and occasionally as raising from a bed of conventional lotuses and lotus leaves, the leaves standing for water region. This is a Pallava technique that we notice in sculpture.

From the above discussion, it follows that it is fairly reasonable to take the four men near the water edge as engaged in their daily ablutions—one in suryopasthana, another in vandana, a third fetching water, and a fourth wringing his wet uttariya (Figs. 13, 15), (a familiar scene—familiar to the Indian on any river bank in India in the contiguity of a shrine. The emaciated *yogi*, with forward bend (Fig. 3), on a rocky *pitha* is Nara in his equation of Arjuna. He is emaciated, because it is easy to compare him, with the penitent Arjuna above, also emaciated, and to convince the spectator that the two are manifestations of one and the same person, namely Nara, the seated figure below representing his original Nara-stage in Badarivana environment, and the standing figure above representing his subsequent stage as Arjuna in the Indrakila environment, where, according to Bharavi, flowed river Ganga, the same river that flowed in Badarivana. The three mutilated figures in front of Nara (Fig. 3) are either normal worshippers in a *tapovana*, one engaged in *Yogabhyasa* with his legs secured by a *yoga*-band, and the other two in religious discourses or representatives of the ascetic world that the *Mahabharata* records as having come to visit Narayana in Badarivana. The Deogarh relief, which the Pallava sculptor evidently knew, shows similarly two visiting ascetics by the side of Narayana and Nara. Details such as lion crouching under Nara's *pitha*, and recumbent deer in an attitude of ease and safety, though in the vicinity of wild animals, are common to the Gupta relief of Nara-Narayana from Deogarh and the relief of Mahabalipuram. The deer couple below Nara consists of the female watching the male from behind, while the male (clear from its horns) is shown in an attractive mood, as if watching the female with seeming indifference, a trait brought out by its attempt to

scratch the face with its legs (Fig. 10a). This is only feigned and the sculptor contrasts the male's air of indifference with the intent attention that the female bestows on its partner.

The scratching deer in its environment gives us a peep into the animal world and behaviour to which the skilful sculptor of Mahabalipuram has given a remarkable touch of realism. As we behold this animal pair we cut through the barriers of rock and our own vision, and feel as though the theme is actually being enacted before our very eyes. Yet if this is illusion, we wonder what then would be realism! Yet another detail, though common on a water side, is the occurrence of a turtle (Fig. 3) in front of this deer couple.

As, by now, we have come to understand the Pallava sculptor to be purposeful in all that he portrays, we have to investigate carefully the neighbourhood for a solution.

Immediately behind the deer couple is the vast unfinished rocky surface-massif, with occasional dens of lurking lions or slumbering deer. As our eye travels in search of the clue, it falls on a leaping or darting deer above (Fig. 3) in sheer vertical alignment to the deer couple. Why has the sculptor endowed this deer with such quick action? It is only to contrast it with what it would be in slow action. To stress this poetic fancy he has shown the animal in quick motion above and the other in slow action below, and both in strict vertical alignment. The same device the sculptor has adopted in depicting Nara and Arjuna. Behind this darting deer and separated by a little distance and space in which nothing interferes to confuse the sculptor's intention, the sculptor has located a turtle with its nose, also in the same direction as that of the darting deer (Fig. 9).

Putting all these details together in one row of continuous narration, viz., the slow-footed turtle, the swift-footed darting deer, the recumbent ease-loving and napping deer and the turtle again with its nose lifted ahead, all in the same direction, it would seem to reflect the sculptor's mind as to how to translate into stone the story of the deer and the turtle that started the race, how the swift-footed deer was winning in the first stages, how it took to rest and nap lured by the company of the doe on the way and lost the race as during its nap the slow but steady turtle won the lost ground and the race. In token of its victory, the turtle is shown at land's end and with head lifted up in token of its hard-won victory. The deer that won much ground at the beginning of the race by its swift-footed darting is still napping as one can see by its fully stretched front leg and its scratching hind leg. As the spectator studies it he wonders if the deer realises the penalty of its weakness viz., that he has lost the race! It may however be argued that the story is alright and sufficiently demonstrates the virtue of perseverance, but in the story it is the hare that lost the race with the turtle. The deer is introduced by the sculptor as suitable to replace the hare, as it is more swift-footed than the hare and more perceptible and familiar to people not to speak of its attraction to humanity by its innocence and harmlessness. If further evidence is needed for the replacement, of the hare by the deer we may cite the instance of the moon as *Sasanka*, who is also fancied as *Saranganka* (*Sarangam sanjagadire*). The dark mark on the moon is fancied by some as the *sasa*. Others replace the *sasa* by the deer (*saranga*). A similar sanction is obvious here and hence we find the more pleasing, the more swift-footed and the more beautiful deer, replacing the ambling hare of negligible stature.

It will thus be seen that the sculptor is adding flavour to what is already pleasing both aesthetically and sculpturally, by creating a web of stories and side stories into the body or text of the main story. This may be better explained, as that, while the sculptor's intention is to pursue the main story of Arjuna's penance in narrative art, he enhanced the *content* value of the sculpture portrayed by letting in as side shows such other stories as pre-stories, moral stories, and explanatory stories of exemplification.

The main story is *Kiratarjuniyam*, whose hero or *Nayaka* is Arjuna. The pre-story is *Badarivana* whose *pataka-nayaka* is Nara (cf. *Malati-Madhava*). Stories of examples and moralisations are the *cat and the mice*, the *turtle and the deer* and the *mole on the moon* or how the moon got his black mark (*Sasa jataka*) etc.

The theory of Arjuna's penance is strengthened on examining the details of the carving in the immediate vicinity of the penitent Arjuna. From the extreme left end to the right where stands Arjuna we can make out the woods with the Indrakila hill in it with lions, deer, monkey, lizard, bird and turtle. The lions, of which five can be made out, are in the various stages of activity characteristic of their life (Figs. 9 & 10). While three are slumbering in their cave dens, one stands out erect, curious to know what is happening around it. A fifth at the extreme left springs up on hearing some movement (Fig. 11). The roaring lion is associated with a party of hunters, four of whom in a line are moving towards where Arjuna is depicted, while the fifth hunter is seen farther high up above Siva with his lower body concealed by the rock (Figs. 9 & 10). All the *kiratas* (hunters) are whiskered and wear loin-clothes. The one in front of the roaring lion at the extreme left holds







13a



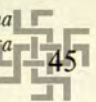
13. *Arjuna's penance relief. Ganga tira with a worshipper offering arghya, and another peering at Surya in Madhyanhika vandana. Mahendra style.*

13a. *Near Arjuna's penance relief. Monkey couple, infant monkey suckling.*

14. *Monkey couple near Arjuna's penance relief. Male catching lice from the female's head. Realistic study.*

15. *Arjuna's penance relief. Ganga bank, with people engaged in daily ablutions such as vandana, fetching water for abhisheka, and wringing wet cloth after bath. Mahendra style.*

16. *Arjuna's penance (right half) Siddha and Vidyadhara student. Mahendra style.*



17

17a



17. Arjuna's penance. (Experimental rough trial). Near lighthouse.

17a. Siva approaching Arjuna in penance. Experimental rough trial of the famous 'Arjuna's penance' relief, near lighthouse. Mahendra style.

17b. Experimental rough trial of 'Arjuna's penance', near lighthouse.

Vidyadharas, Kinnaras, Sadhyas, Surya, animals (lion, deer) and peacocks. Mahendra style.

17c. Experimental rough carving Arjuna's penance near lighthouse. Anxious but alert peacocks and d watching. Mahendra style.

17d. Experimental trial of Arjuna's penance, near lighthouse. Sports elephant in water swallowing lotus. Mahendra style.



17b





17d

a bow with his hair secured in a top-knot and with a leather loin-cloth covering his thigh. A reed is inserted in his left ear (*patra*) as we find hunters doing even today. His right ear is empty. The sculptor has succeeded in showing that this hunter, as he is marching, is unaware of the springing lion behind him. Another hunter similar to him in all respects goes in front of him and is negotiating a high rock. He carries a load on a *kavadi* set up on his left shoulder. In front of him and on a higher elevation of the rock squats a monkey with its back to him while a rabbit bolts away with alert ears (Fig. 10). A large lizard (perhaps *udumbu*) creeps up the rock-side and a bird settles on a tree (Fig. 9).

What is sculptured in front of this rocky surface is a puzzle, for below them, a lion crouches in its hiding place, an inactive deer stands at ease in front of another, while a hunter similar to the others, but with grown up beard, walks near them, holding his bow firmly by the right hand and adjusting a bag of provisions on his left shoulder. What is there behind this phenomena, one may wonder! Timid animals like deer walk with comfort and ease in front of lions, monkeys sit on their haunches and watch undisturbed; lions do not leap on their prey within easy reach; hunters though with bows do not hit the lion, the deer, or the rabbit also within reach.

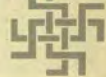


This puzzle is explained by a detail in the story of Arjuna's penance lime-lighted by Bharavi⁶. When Siva's *ganas* followed their master and changed themselves into hunters in their journey to Indrakila making noise in the wood in their march, even animals naturally hostile, who were thus roused, forgot their instinct and moved side by side. The sculptor accepts Bharavi's explanation of this miracle, which is that, in the face of a catastrophe, or against a big enemy, animals combine though normally hostile to each other⁷.

Another hunter, with prominent moustache and a *kavadi* of provisions on his left shoulder, marches ahead of a similar hunter, while, in front of him, a deer and lioness, back to back, forget their natural hostility and are looking out with obvious composure. Above, on an elevated rock, in front of the hunter, is a party of three *ganas*, dwarfish and pot-bellied with their hands expressing adoration or ecstasy. In front of the lioness, a turtle, and, ahead of it, a darting antelope, have already been noticed as constituting a realistic study of slow and quick motion. Below the forest scene is the unfinished part of the rock, nearly a fourth in proportion to the whole bas-relief.

What was originally meant by the sculptor to go on this vast empty space? That forest scenes were mostly meant to be shown, will be evident if we examine some of the cubes vertically below the row of lioness and the darting antelope and behind and below the penitent Nara. In such cubes, we find in one a recumbent antelope, an advancing deer in another and three lionesses at rest each in a cave. Two of the lionesses at the bottom-most part of the unfinished rock are in a line with the crouching lion under Nara's *pitha*. Some of the dwarfish *ganas* that followed Siva disguised as hunters have been described already. Eight of these *ganas* in their *gana* form are shown to the left of the penitent Arjuna, two at the extreme left, and three on a rocky elevation behind Siva, and three by the side of Siva, two on the left of Siva and one of slightly larger size on the right between Arjuna and Siva (Fig. 9). One of the *ganas* on Siva's left holds a conch-shell-horn while the other holds something indistinct, but possibly a castanet in the left and a *kaisilambu* (cymbals) in the right. Now we come to an important *gana* on Siva's proper left who by his relatively larger size and a conventional lion's head depicted across his fat belly suggests that the sculptor gave special attention to it. Such *ganas* are popular in ancient Indian sculpture and literature as *Kumbhandas* or *Udaremkhas*. This *gana* holds in his right hand a trident similar to what Siva holds in his lower right hand. This was mistaken by earlier writers for a fly-whisk or *chamara*, which it is not, as we shall see presently. The proper identification of this important *gana* will be possible by studying the sculpture of Siva by its side. For, whatever the *gana* carries in his right hand is only a miniature of what Siva holds in his right hand.

If this is remembered, the entire sculpture is best understood and the continuity of the story of Arjuna's penance is assured. Siva is sculptured big, with a dignified stature and his iconographical details led writers to identify him as Bhikshatana. But Bhikshatana should be nude and wear *padukas*, and carry a kettle drum. Here Siva is shown exactly as Bharavi describes him. He has a trident in his lower right hand, his left lower is spread in *varada* or the pose of benevolence and is pointing down presumably to draw our attention to the scene carved below. His upper right hand is in the position of holding something (can it be the antelope?) and the upper left holds an axe. Siva's upper right hand which we have described as holding something might have possessed as its right content the antelope or his lower right hand which is in seeming *varada* may be construed as stroking or fondling a springing antelope which is generally the correct description of Bhikshatana. Where exactly has the antelope gone? Is the antelope that we see darting below Siva, however separated from him by a sheet of rock, the antelope that slipped out of his upper right hand or ran away without springing to reach his lower right hand? The sculptor ingeniously has given rise to all these problems by his dexterous juxta-position of the antelope. Why should he put the spectator to such speculation and confusion? Before we answer this question let us describe Siva completely. A *jatamakuta*, long *yajnopavita* of a single thick chord, loin-cloth stretching to the knee, big *patra-kundala* in the left ear and a ring-like *kundala* in the right ear are depicted appropriately. That he carries the moon on his head is not conventionalised by showing the crescent moon (*Chandrakala*) on his head as is usually the case, but by actually showing *chandra* in his anthropomorphic form as a divine hovering figure above his head. A halo behind Chandra distinguishes Chandra. The detached representation of Chandra to stress the idea that Siva is Chandrasekhara⁸, a darting antelope below clearly suggesting that he is the bewitching Bhikshatana, the form in which Siva roamed till he reached Brahmakapala in the Himalayas⁹, and a trident in his right hand to suggest that he is *Pinakapani* are adequately stressed by the sculptor who was presumably inspired by Bharavi's verses particularly those attributed to Arjuna when after his combat with Siva as Kirata he beheld Siva with divine eyes. Arjuna describes Siva in verses in which stress is laid on his Bhikshatana sport, the moon crest of Siva and his trident. As *pinaka* means both trident and bow, the trident that Siva holds in the sculpture suggests on the one hand that Siva is *Pinakapani* generally, and that, in the present



case, is out to bless his devotee Arjuna by conferring on him the *pinaka* in the shape of *Pasupatastra*. There is a double *entendre* played by the sculptor which brings out his skill. Of special interest to us is the fact that Siva is sculptured here exactly as Bharavi says, Arjuna beheld him. The relevant verses from the 18th Sarga are as follows: (Verses 15, 21, 31, 32 and 46).

अथ हिमशुचिभस्मभूषितं शिरसि विराजितमिन्दुलेखया ।
स्ववपुरति मनोहरं हरं दधत्तमुदीक्ष्य ननाम पाण्डवः ॥ १८-१५ ॥
कृतवृत्तिं परिवन्दितेनोच्चकैर्गणपतिभिरभिल्लरोमोद्गमैः ।
तपसि कृतफले फलज्यायसि स्तुतिरिति जगदे हरेः स्तुतना ॥ १८-२१ ॥
न रागि चेतः परमा विलासिता वधूः शरीरेऽस्ति न चास्ति मन्मथः ।
नमस्कृत्या चोषसि धातुरित्यहो निसर्गं दुर्बोधमिदं तवेहितम् ॥ १८-३१ ॥
तवोत्तरीयं करिचर्म साङ्गजं ज्वलन्मणिः सारसनं महानहः ।
स्त्रगास्यर्षवित् शवभस्म चन्दनं कला हिमांशोश्चसमं चकासति ॥ १८-३२ ॥
अथ शशधरमौलेरभ्यनुज्ञामवाप्य ।
त्रिदशपतिपुरोगाः पूर्णकामाय तस्मै ॥
अवितथफलमार्शोवाद्मारोपयन्तो ।
विजयि विविधमस्त्रं लोकपाला वितेरुः ॥ १८-४६ ॥

[Then as the Pandava saw Shiva assuming his own form, decorated with snow-white ashes, lustrously shining with the crescent moon on the head, and extremely lovely, he bowed down (to Him). (18.15)

Whole-heartedly praised by the Lords of Ganas, in loud tones (but) without experiencing any (undue sense) of horripilation, Indra's son (Arjuna)—with the acquisition of the (full) fruit of (his) penance and also (the sense of) satisfaction, recited this praise more enormous than the fruit (of his penance). (18.21)

“ There is no passion in your heart (but) the amorous graces are at their height. The bride exists in (the half of your) body but the Cupid has no place. The God of creation offers His salutations (to you) in the early hours of the morning. Thus, Oh, your performance defies comprehension by its very nature ! (18.31)

“ The hairy elephant-hide is your upper garment; the great serpent with the blazing jewel is your decorative belt; a row of skulls is your garland; the ashes of dead-bodies is your sandal-paste: (these), shine simultaneously with the digit of the moon ! (18.32).

The Guardians of the Worlds led by the Lord of the Heaven (Indra), getting the permission from the Moon-bearing Shiva, showered on him (Arjuna)—whose desires were accomplished—the blessings, whose fruit would never be falsified; and handed over to him the multiple, conquering missile. (18.46)]

The above verses draw our attention to the fact that, with the moon over Siva's head, the bewitchingly handsome appearance of Siva, attracted even the wives of the sages. The applauding *ganas*, who, abandoning their *kirata*-disguise stood around Siva, received emphasis at the hands of both Poet Bharavi and the Pallava sculptor of Mahabalipuram. One cannot imagine a more bewitching form of Siva than that of Bhikshatana, which induced even the wives of the forest sages to pine away for him. Such, indeed, is Siva in the sculpture surrounded appropriately by the applauding *ganas*.

The *gana* of the *kumbhanda* type with a lion-face on his belly and a trident in his right hand represents *Pasupatastra* which Bharavi describes as “*Raudramastram*”¹¹ and as “*Tanumbhimam bibhrat-triguna parivara praharanah*” and the Mahabharata describes as waiting upon Partha (*Vana*, *Kirata Parva*—VV. 20-21).

The term ‘*Triguna parivara*’ is translated by Mallinatha as standing for *trisula*.

Having understood the sculptor's tendency to play double *entendre*, it is interesting for us to see that the depiction of Chandra above Siva serves a double purpose. It shows Siva as ‘*Sasadharamauli*’¹² as Arjuna beheld him and also brings out the idea that Arjuna's penance, his victory and Siva's award and announcement, were witnessed by the stellars along with terrestrials and celestials. The stellars (*jotir-mandala*) are represented by Chandra as we have described above and by Surya with a halo behind his head symmetrically posed on the right side of the fissure (river) in the same alignment. Both *Chandra* and *Surya*, with one of their hands raised symmetrically suggest adoration (*stava*). The celestial group and demigods are adequately represented as already described (see p. 37) by pairs of *vidyadharas*, with hands suggesting singing, *kinnaras* (half bird and half human), the female with cymbals and the male with lute or vina and *gandharvas* hovering in the sky (Figs. 9 and 10). Behind Chandra can be noticed the upper part of a *kirata* whose hidden appearance (Fig. 9) and perhaps stealthy approach alone separated from his *kirata* companions who are far away from him recalls Bharavi's description as Siva approaching Arjuna as *Kirata* in the first

instance on the track of game after leaving the *kirata* army below in the marshy bog of river Ganga and taking care to conceal his body behind bushes and stones¹³ (Fig. 9).

Does he then represent the *kirata* form of Siva? He may be the *kirata* form of Siva or any *kirata*, as Bharavi says a handful of *kiratas* followed Siva. It will be clear that the Siva who came to bless Arjuna is Pinaki, Chandrasekhara and even Bhikshatana, but is by no means Siva as Gangadhara. Gangadhara must be Siva's form if we accept the theory of Bhagiratha's penance. As Gangadhara he should stand with his right leg planted vertically on the earth and the left slightly bent. His upper right arm should be raised to support a braid of his locks on which river Ganga descends or settles (cf. Trichinopoly cave temple and Adivaraha Cave). This form was known to the Pallava architect who carved it at Trichinopoly and Mahabalipuram. When the Pallavas had a clear form of Gangadhara known to them, their failure to adopt it here was because they were out to show the God that Arjuna found, Kiratarjunamurti. In the many praises that Arjuna pours out on beholding Siva, there is none referring to Gangadhara either in Bharavi's version or even in the Mahabharata.

The right half of the bas-relief is but a continuation of the list of beholders who, beholding, applauded the grand event. (Figs. 5 and 12). They are of the terrestrial, celestial, aquatic, ariel and stellar regions. The elephant herd, monkeys, cat, mice, turtle, antelopes, rabbit, lions of the terrestrial; *nagas* and *naginis* and reptiles of the aquatic; and geese, peacocks, peahen of the skies have already been described. In a broad sheet of rock facing the river and Arjuna are arrayed Surya, dwarfish *ganas*, *kinnara* couples, *vidyadhara* couples, *siddhas* (Fig. 16) and *sadhys* with a sprinkling of deer and lions. A lion with its tail in a loop shown at the extreme right (Fig. 12) is in typical Mahendra style of sculpturing the animal¹⁴, while *ganas* move quaintly on the earth with their fat bellies, the *vidyadhara* and *kinnara* pairs hover elegantly in the sky singing. Two pairs at the extreme right are of men hovering in the sky and represent a class of demi-gods called *siddhas* who can fly and appear anywhere and at any moment and who inhabit *bhuvārloka* between earth and heaven (Fig. 12).

Thus the whole bas-relief provides necessary attendant paraphernalia of the grand event of Arjuna's penance versified by poet Bharavi, who was celebrated for his grand conceptions and ideas¹⁵.

Such a classical work was translated into permanent stone by a galaxy of sculptors and artists who adorned the Pallava court.

Apart from fidelity to the story of Arjuna's penance versified by Bharavi, the sculptor has displayed fidelity to human and animal behaviour. Let us take for instance, a few animals depicted on the relief and consider them one by one from the right. First comes a horned deer walking naturally (Fig. 12). Below it are two lions vertically one below the other with pronounced mane also moving and with tails in loop. To its front is a lion with front paw slightly raised as in Vishnukundin seal depicting the lion, and tail lifted up and ending in a big loop as in Pallava sculpture in Siyamangalam cave attributed to Mahendravarman I, which is a sure evidence on grounds of style of a Mahendra date to the relief. The sculptor has posed the lion with a looped tail by the side of a slumbering lioness in a den which is in its natural surroundings. Again, in front of the above lion, is posed in a horizontal row a group of two lions placed between two marching deer, all indicating clearly the purpose of their marching towards the river or towards the spot where Arjuna is doing penance. At the extreme right end, on a free and separate relief we notice a monkey couple set up naturally, (Figs. 13a and 14) the male squatting on its haunches behind the female and catching lice from the female's head, while the female is depicted with her eyes revealing rapture caught between the pleasure in feeding her child (Fig. 13a) from her breasts and the pleasure that her husband gave in relieving the lice from her head (Fig. 14).

How realistic the cat and the mice are and how they are in correct proportion to the herd of marching elephants by their side has already been noticed (Fig. 8).

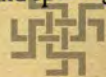
Little elephant calves playing between the legs of the marching chief recall the elephant world to the spectators' gaze (Fig. 6).

The second elephant behind the big first one has raised its trunk and slightly bent its front leg in a remarkable pose of care for which the elephant is noted while it moves (Fig. 6a). Its magnanimity is ever present as it moves.

Peacocks and peahen and geese and *sarasa* birds (Fig. 3) on either side of river Ganga stam the area with all the liveliness when birds foregather.

A male monkey sitting on its haunches and with its tail lifted up, as though in authority, espying a couple of female monkeys submissive to it, an attitude revealed by their hanging tails and with their eyes all attention on the male monkey, in spite of a river partitioning them from the male is a true study of monkey behaviour (Fig. 3).

The sculptor really excels while depicting darting antelopes, static antelopes, slumbering antelopes (Fig. 10-A), scratching antelopes and resting antelopes; so also while depicting lions in different moods, sleeping, marching, roaring or leaping. Elephants marching, playing and sporting



constitute a peerless realistic study. Last but not the least in importance are turtles in slow motion and rats in the various stages of their rodent movements (Fig. 8). We should not forget, however, in our study of the *nagas* and *naginis* that they are reptiles, a conception to which the sculptor has done due justice by showing a *naga* in his pristine condition namely a cobra with raised hood (Fig. 3).

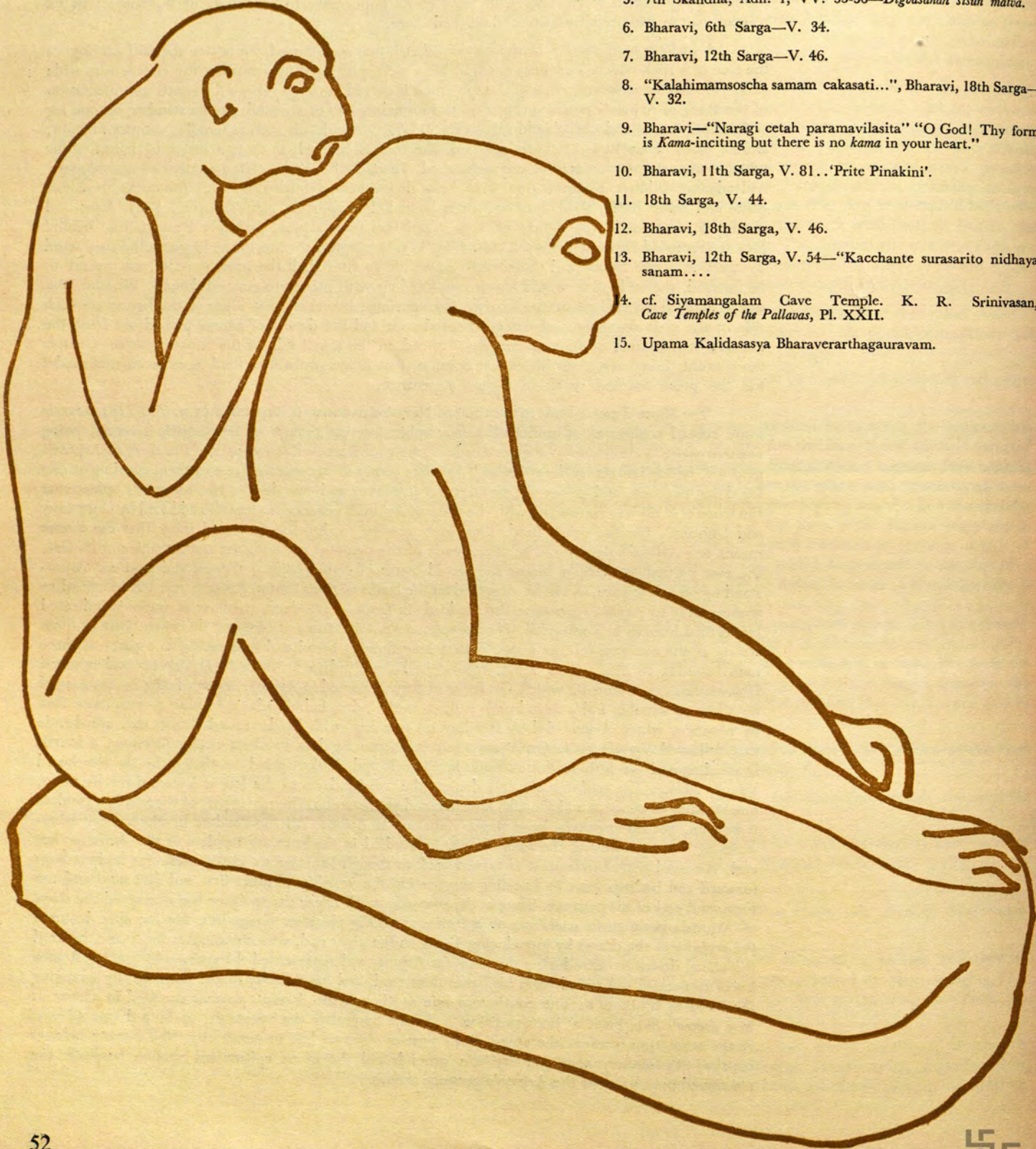
Yet another crude carving occurs on the rock-crop of Mahabalipuram which can be explained as a rough trial plan or sketch designed earlier than the great composition just described, but dropped either because of technical flaw or lack of fidelity to the original, or else it may be a later copy of the great relief relegated to less skilled hands betraying a decadence of Pallava art that could not have set in either in the time of Mahendra or of Mamalla. The absence of, or frugal use of, cube-scraping here, is worth noting, in view of its importance to our study of the subject in its relation to the great relief which is described here.

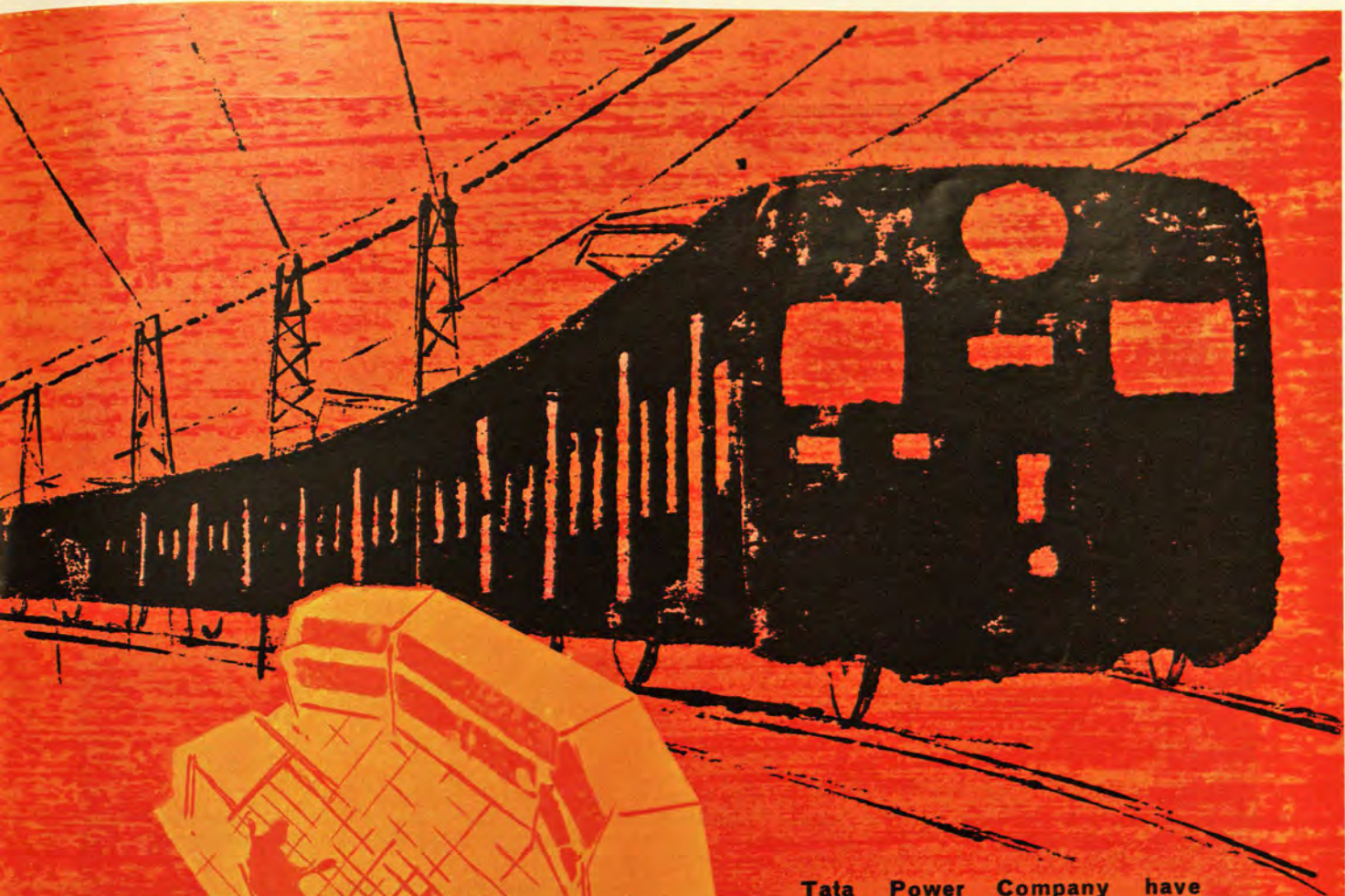
A furlong to the south of the bigger relief hitherto discussed, we notice the said carving on the face of a rock which, curiously enough, has a cleft splitting it into two but the cleft is very wide (Fig. 17). On the eastern surface of the split rock is carved in rough relief a duplicate representation of the story of Arjuna's penance (Fig. 17). Unfinished figures of Siva and Arjuna standing on one leg with raised arms stand out in bold relief (Fig. 17a). Other details such as temple, ascetics in front, animal worshippers have not been outlined. The rock is cracked, as though struck by lightning for which reason the work was obviously unfinished. Towards the wide cleft a number of worshippers, Vidyadharas, Siddhas, Kinnaras (Fig. 17b), semi-divine beings, birds (Fig. 17c) (peacocks, peahens, geese and water birds) saras, hunters, animals including sporting elephants (Fig. 17d), lions and antelopes are turned. The figures of Arjuna and Siva with a *gana*, probably Pasupatastra, behind Siva are removed far away from the cleft (Fig. 17). In contrast to this, in the bigger relief they stand by the side of the fissure and their relative position is altered. If the present relief was meant to be finished, the wide cleft would have to be filled up with plaster to conceal defects. Whether this was actually done will never be known. It is curious, however, that some of the figures on each side of the cleft show signs of being plastered over and the details of figures picked out from the material in the same manner as may be noticed on the north side of the Shore Temple. On this moot point, Longhurst gives his expert opinion, that it was probably a kind of experimental model for the great finished work of Arjuna's penance.

The Shore Temple built in the time of Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha (A.D. 700-728), reveals some ruined sculptures of sufficient iconographic interest though of less artistic interest, being weather-worn. One frieze on the north side of the enclosure wall shows part of the story of Arjuna's penance, which Longhurst describes as "the same group of six ascetics, one of them standing on one leg doing penance, and below the penitent cat a monkey and two deer". He, however, opines that the scene is in no way connected with the story of Arjuna's penance, a view also adduced by Goloubew and Dubreuil. On the other hand, their very reasons to disprove it would show that the theme meant was Arjuna's penance. The occurrence of the penitent cat with the trustful mice at its feet, the two recumbent deer as below the seated figure of Nara (Arjuna) the cat and penitent Arjuna standing on one leg are, as can be expected on the banks of river Ganga. River Ganga and its attendant scenes apply to Arjuna's penance also. Indeed, in front of the deer, the flow of water is indicated by vertical lines as in a waterfall. The six men are not ascetics as Longhurst describes. One of them sitting at the extreme left, is a sage with a long flowing beard and is speaking to a party of three men listening to him. He is Vyasa, who visited the Pandava brothers in Dvaitavana and initiated Dharmaputra in *Pratishmrti*, which the latter in turn imparted to Arjuna. Arjuna being commissioned by Vyasa to worship Indra in Indrakila hill, to meet Indra, Indra's advice to him to propitiate Siva by penance, which Arjuna did by standing on one leg with hands raised above, etc. are details that followed Vyasa's visit. On Vyasa's left are three Pandava brothers sitting listening, a fourth is standing and the fifth at the extreme left kneels and looks behind as though he has also heard Vyasa's advice. The sculptor cleverly depicts the five Pandavas to the left of Vyasa, three listening, one standing in penance and the fifth kneeling and yet listening. The upper part of the standing Pandava is broken, yet his penitent pose singles him out as Arjuna. All the Pandava brothers wear *kirita-mukutas*. The ingenuity of the sculptor can be studied in the kneeling Pandava at the extreme left end. His head with *kirita-mukuta* is turned back as though listening to Vyasa, while his body is bent forward and his legs bent in kneeling suggesting the worship of Indra first and Siva next and the successful end of his penance. Thus in the span of a small frieze the sculptor has attempted the story of Arjuna's penance in *samkshepa* or epitome as taking place on Ganga-tira. He has ably depicted the *prologue* of the drama by introducing Vyasa on the right end, who commences the story, centred the actual drama by introducing the penitent Arjuna, and represented the *epilogue* by making Arjuna kneel to receive the award from his benevolent God, and has skilfully linked them all, by arranging the Pandava brothers in one continuous line as though the *dramatis personae* are filed in a row as in a *drama's finis*. Such a juxta-position is meant to gratify the spectator, as in a drama (*drya*), at the same time present the story, from proper right to left in continuity. The carving belongs to the 8th century A. D. on stylistic grounds and, being an epitomised version bespeaks the continued popularity of the Arjuna's penance theme.

FOOTNOTES

1. This Dandin of Kanchi is supposed to be later than Dandin of *Dasakumaracharita*.
2. T. N. Ramachandran: *Kiratarjuniya*, Pl. vi.
3. By living rock we mean what was rock a little while ago has become lively by the scenes worked out of it—in other words life has been pulled out of the erstwhile dead matter, rock.
4. Carr : *Seven Pagodas*, p. 200.
5. 7th Skandha, Adh. 1, VV. 35-36—*Digvasanah sisun matva*.
6. Bharavi, 6th Sarga—V. 34.
7. Bharavi, 12th Sarga—V. 46.
8. "Kalahimamsoscha samam cakasati...", Bharavi, 18th Sarga—V. 32.
9. Bharavi—"Naragi cetah paramavilasita" "O God! Thy form is *Kama*-inciting but there is no *kama* in your heart."
10. Bharavi, 11th Sarga, V. 81.. 'Prite Pinakini'.
11. 18th Sarga, V. 44.
12. Bharavi, 18th Sarga, V. 46.
13. Bharavi, 12th Sarga, V. 54—"Kacchante surasarito nidhaya sanam...."
14. cf. Siyamangalam Cave Temple. K. R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, Pl. XXII.
15. Upama Kalidasasya Bharaverarthagauravam.





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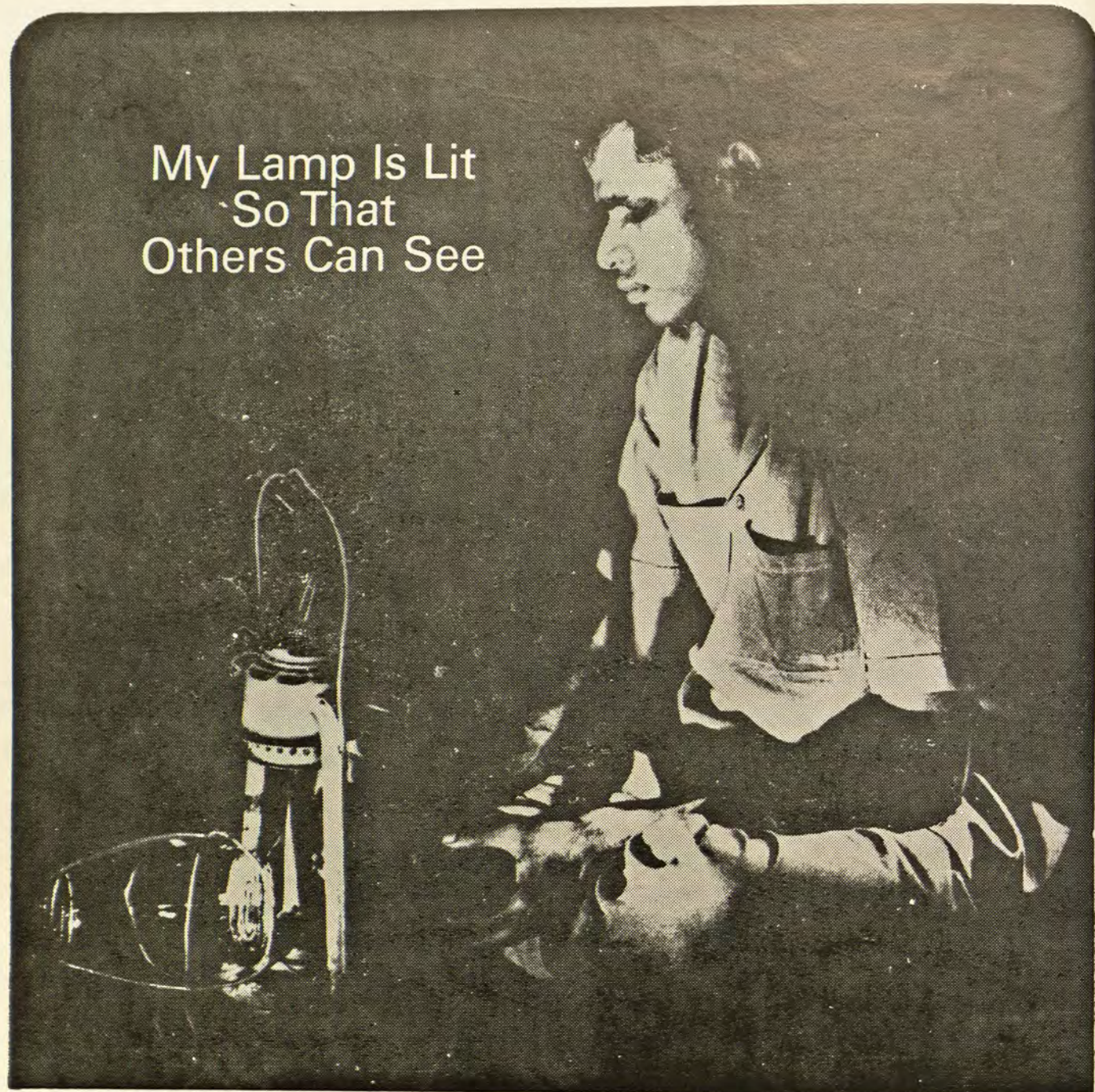
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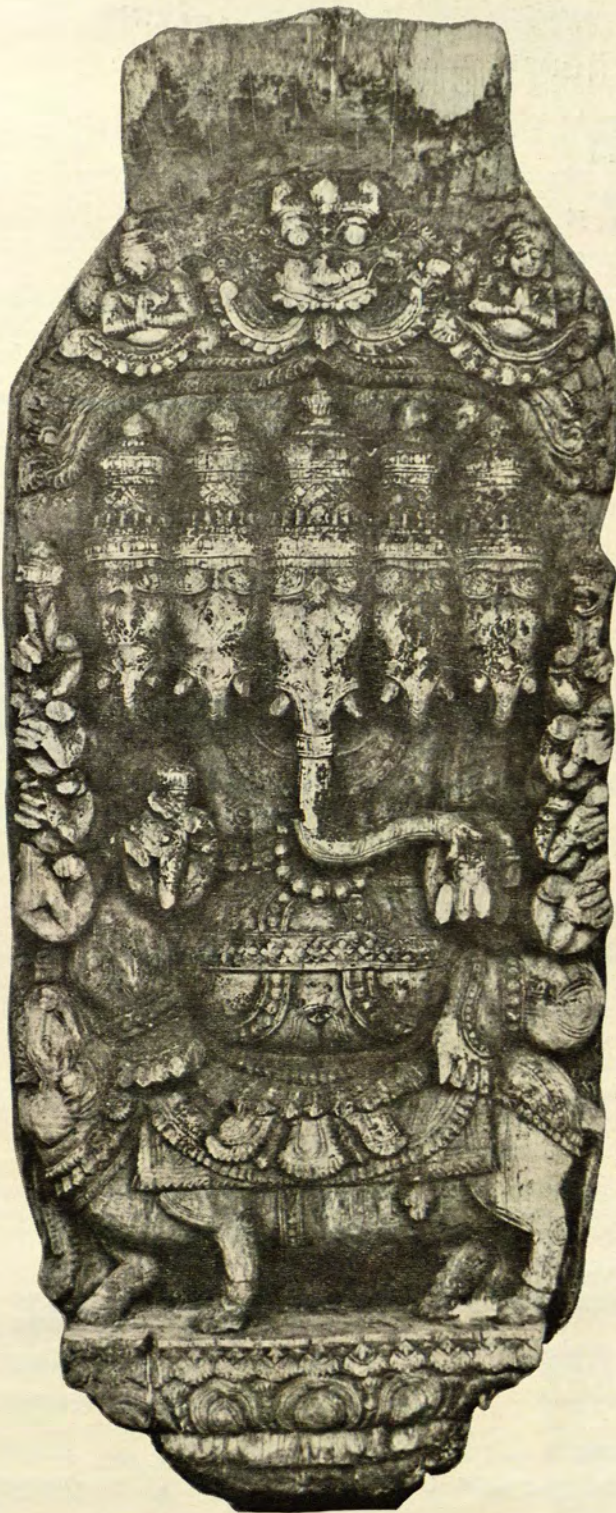


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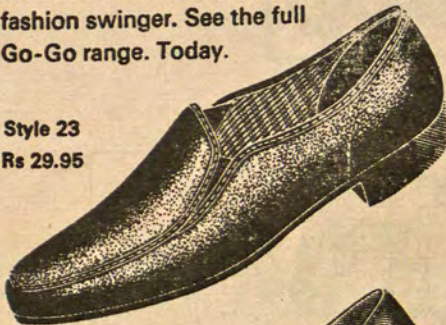
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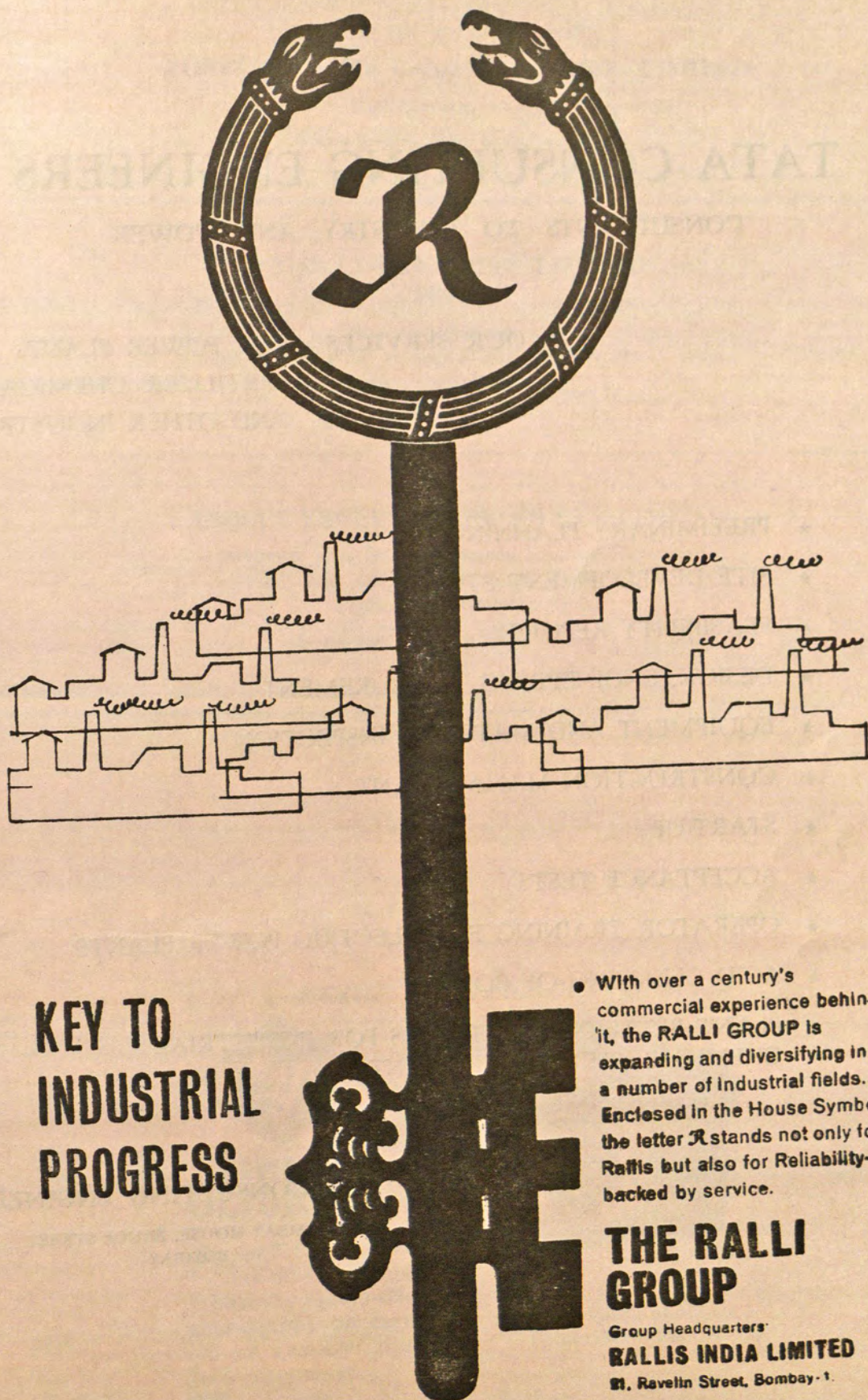
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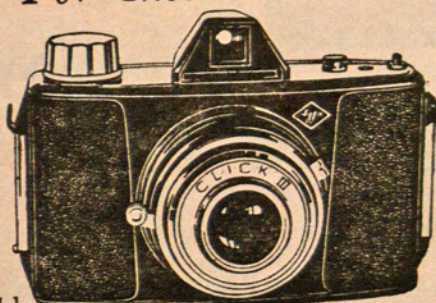
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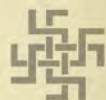
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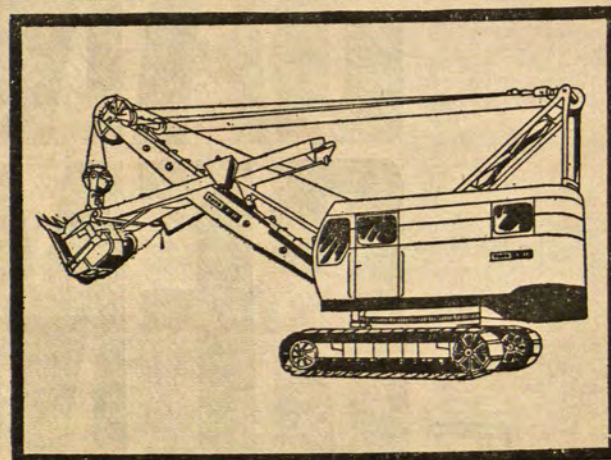
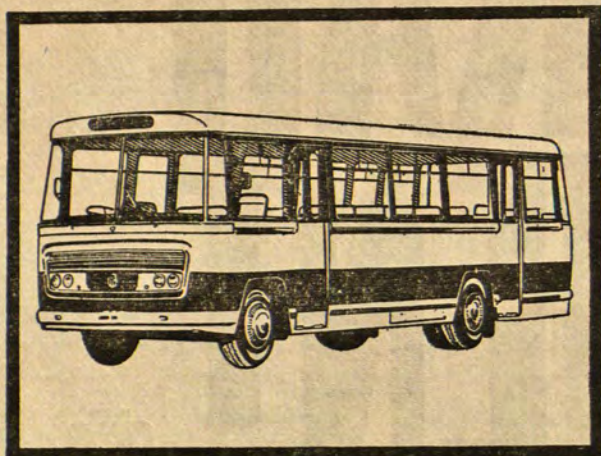
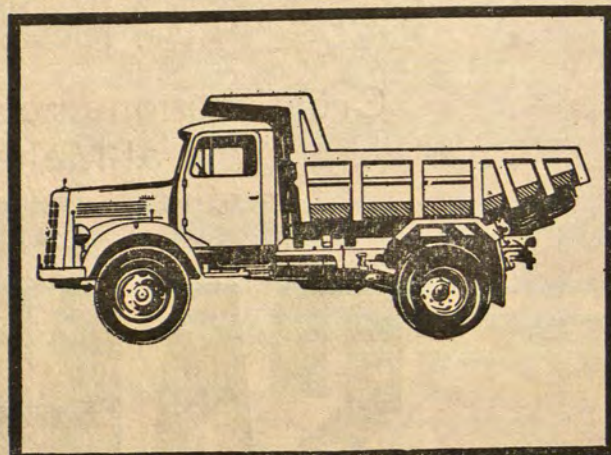
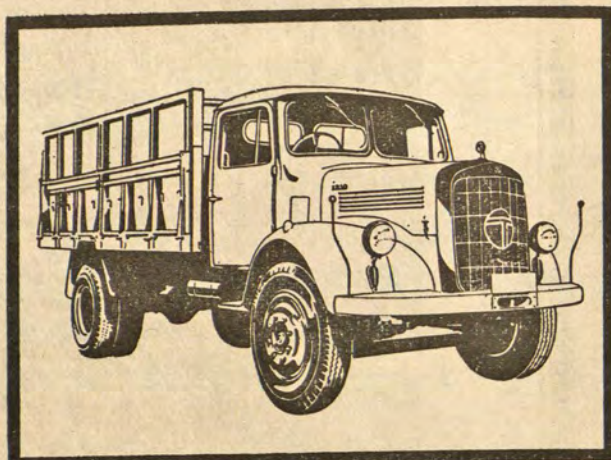
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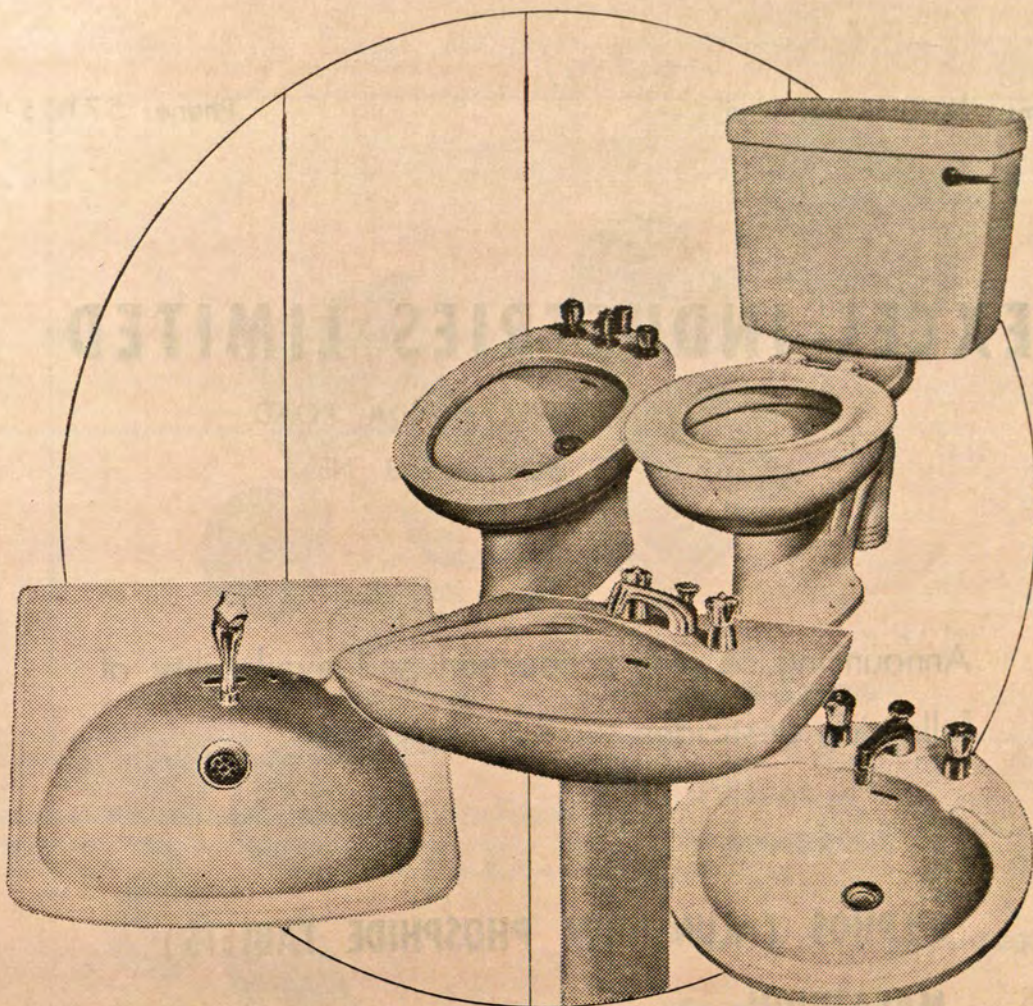
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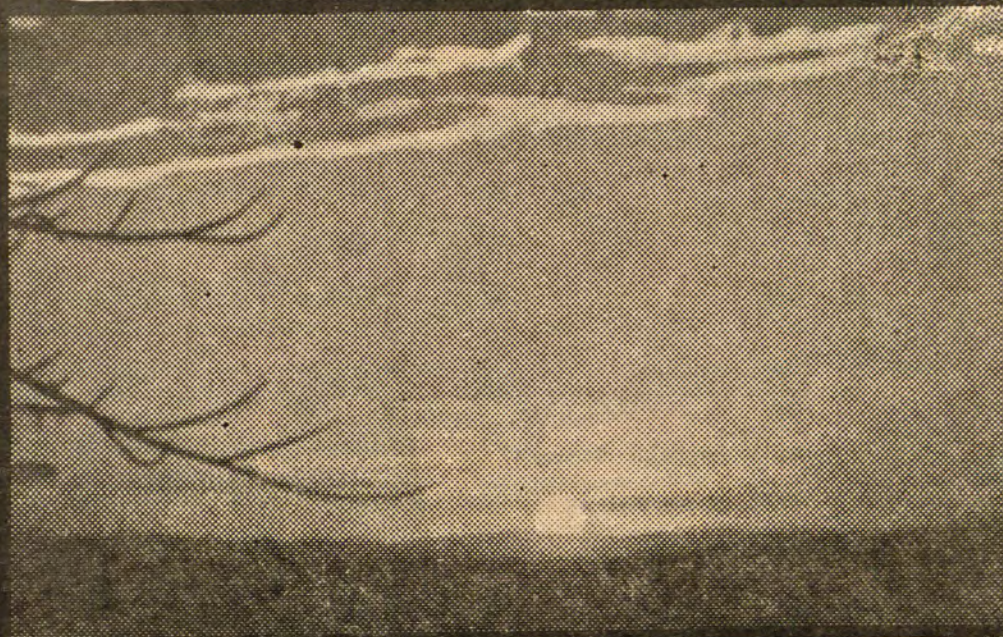
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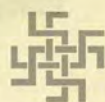
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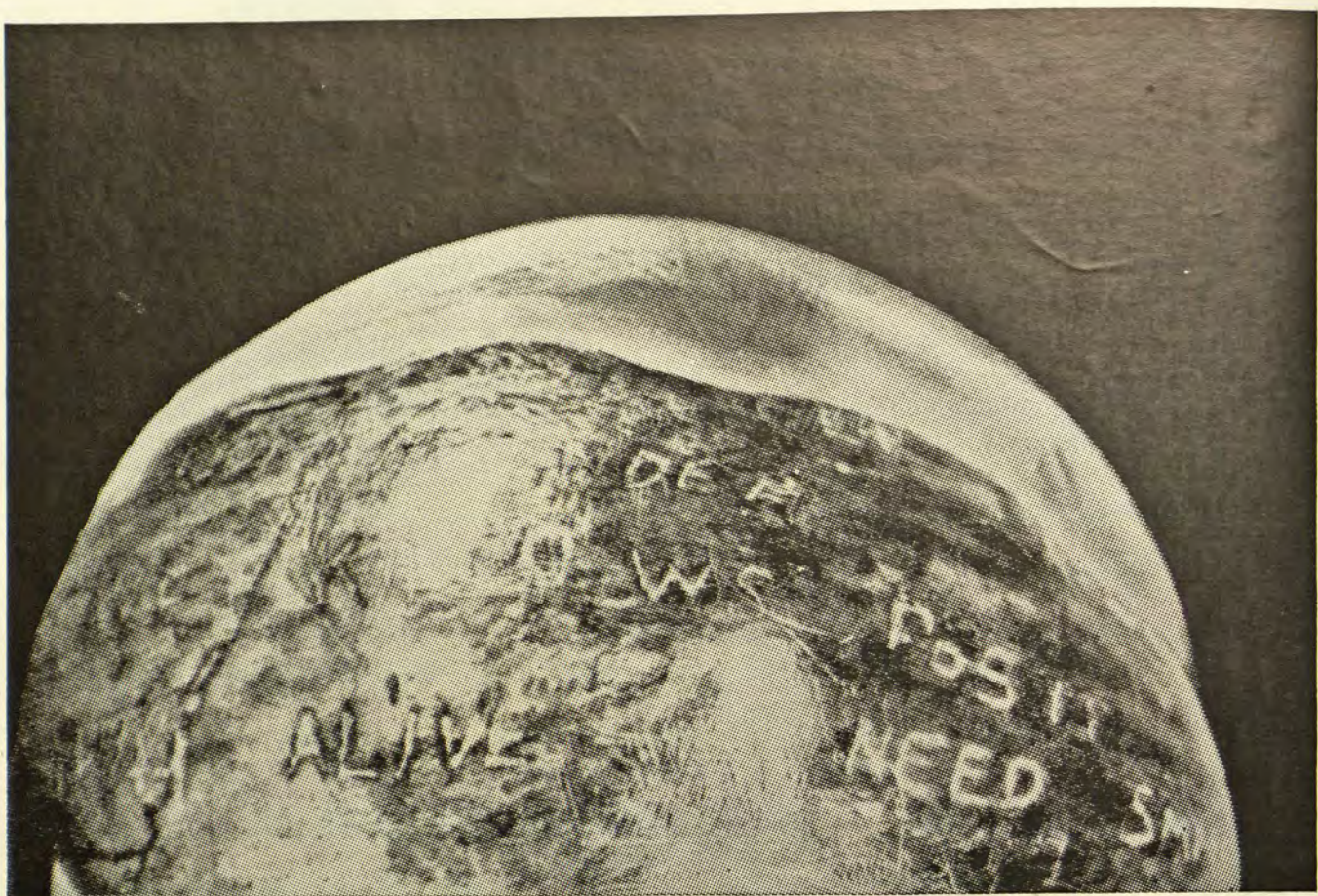
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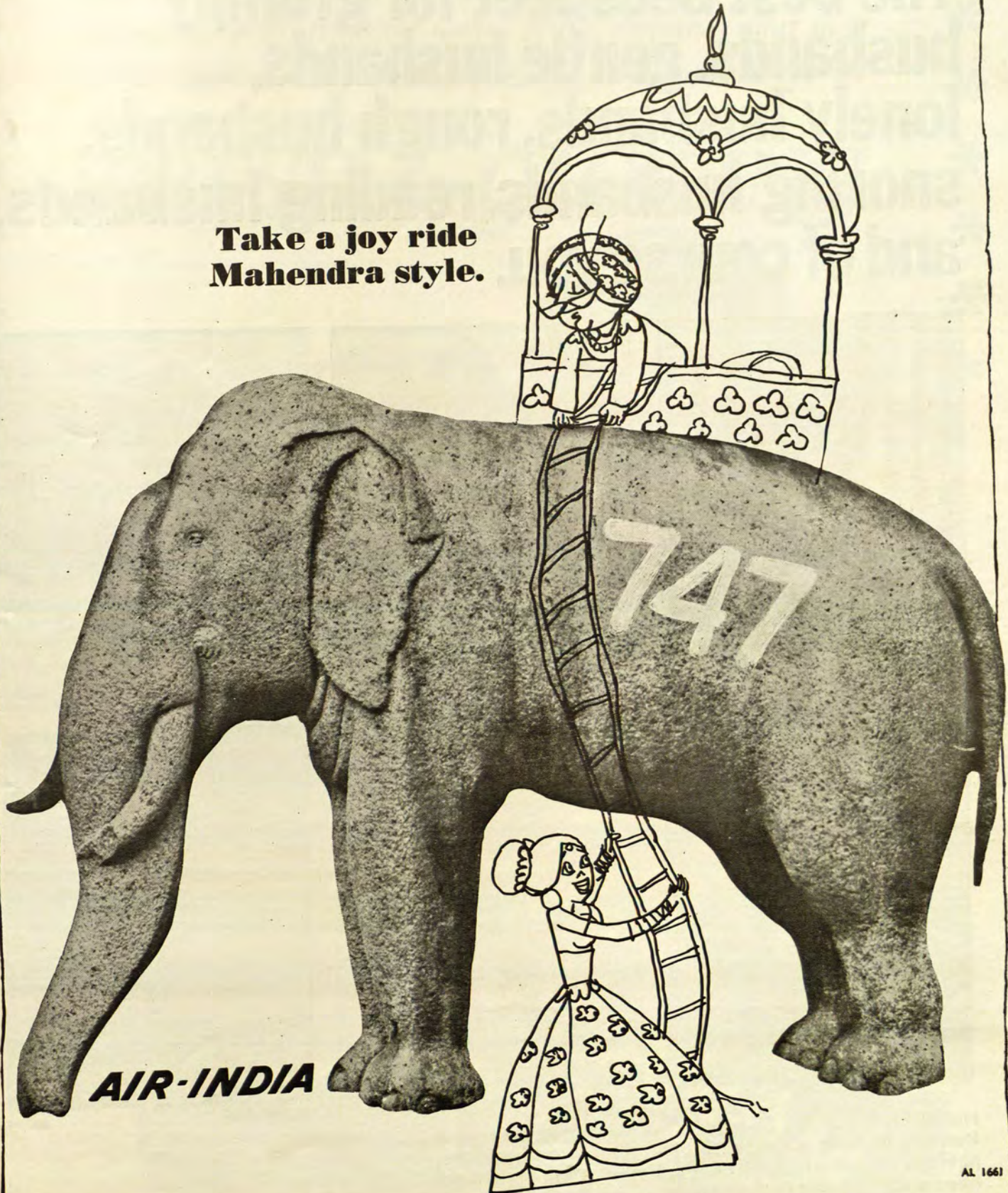
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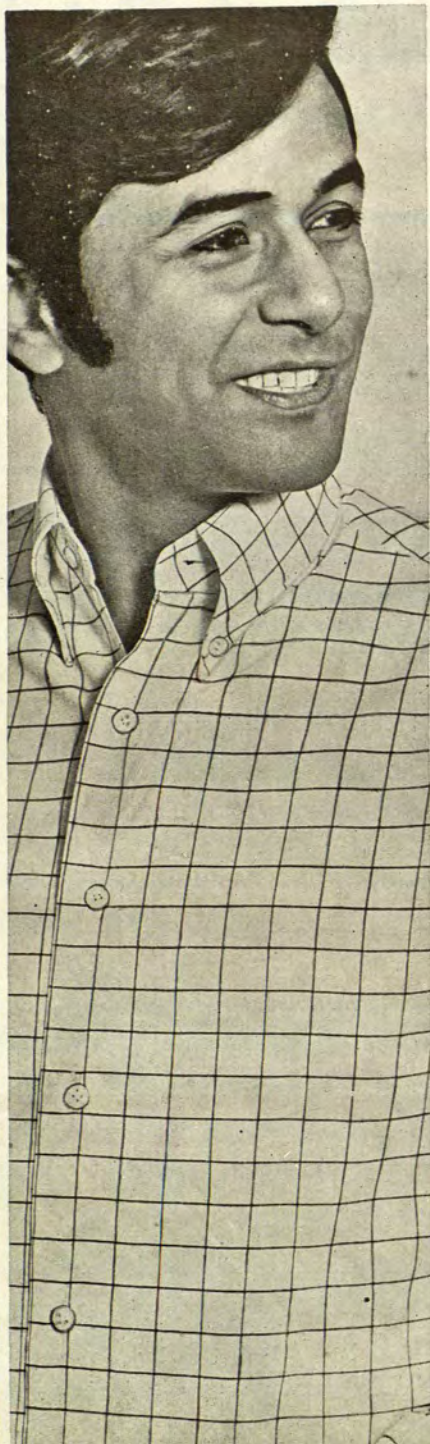


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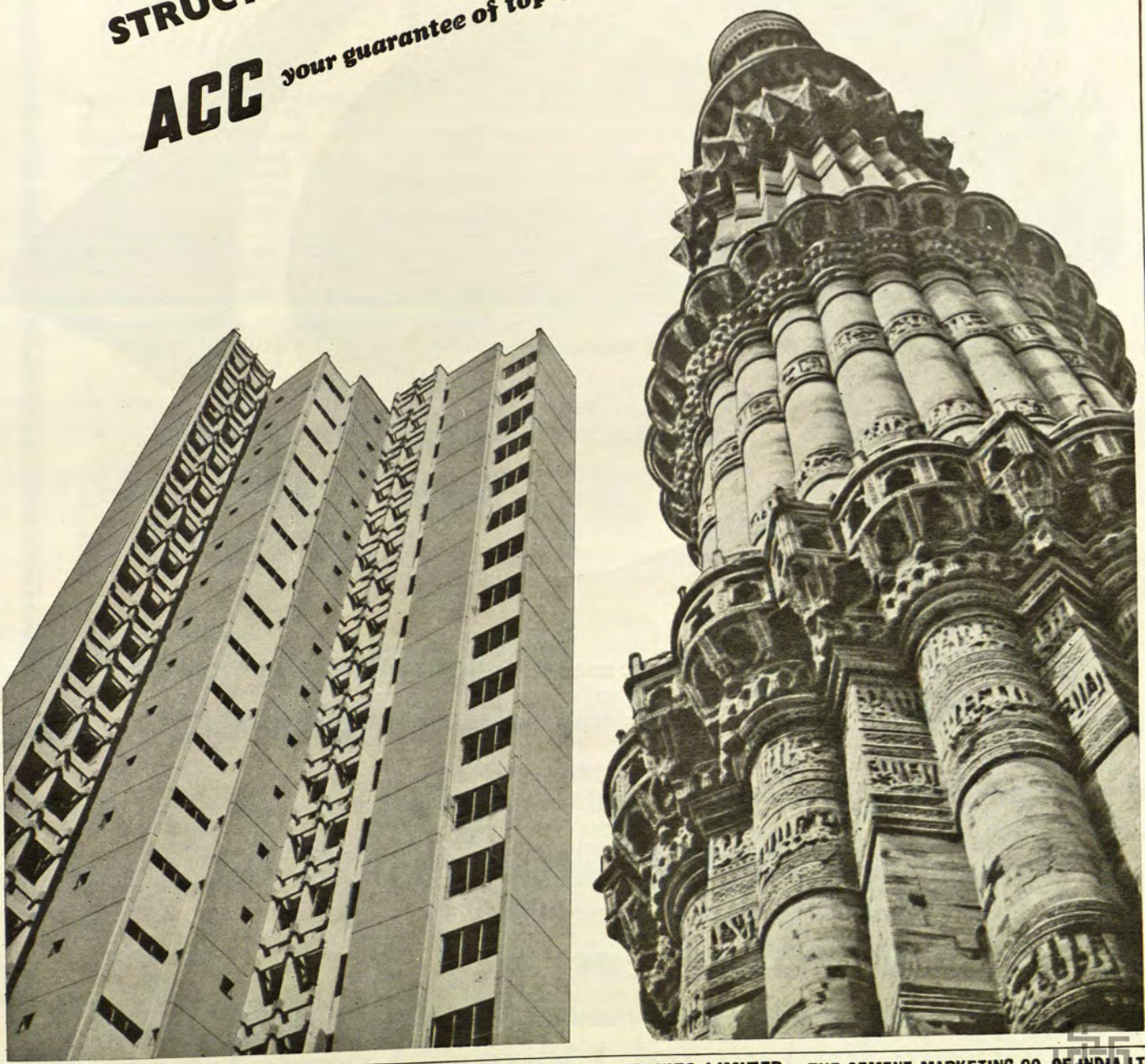


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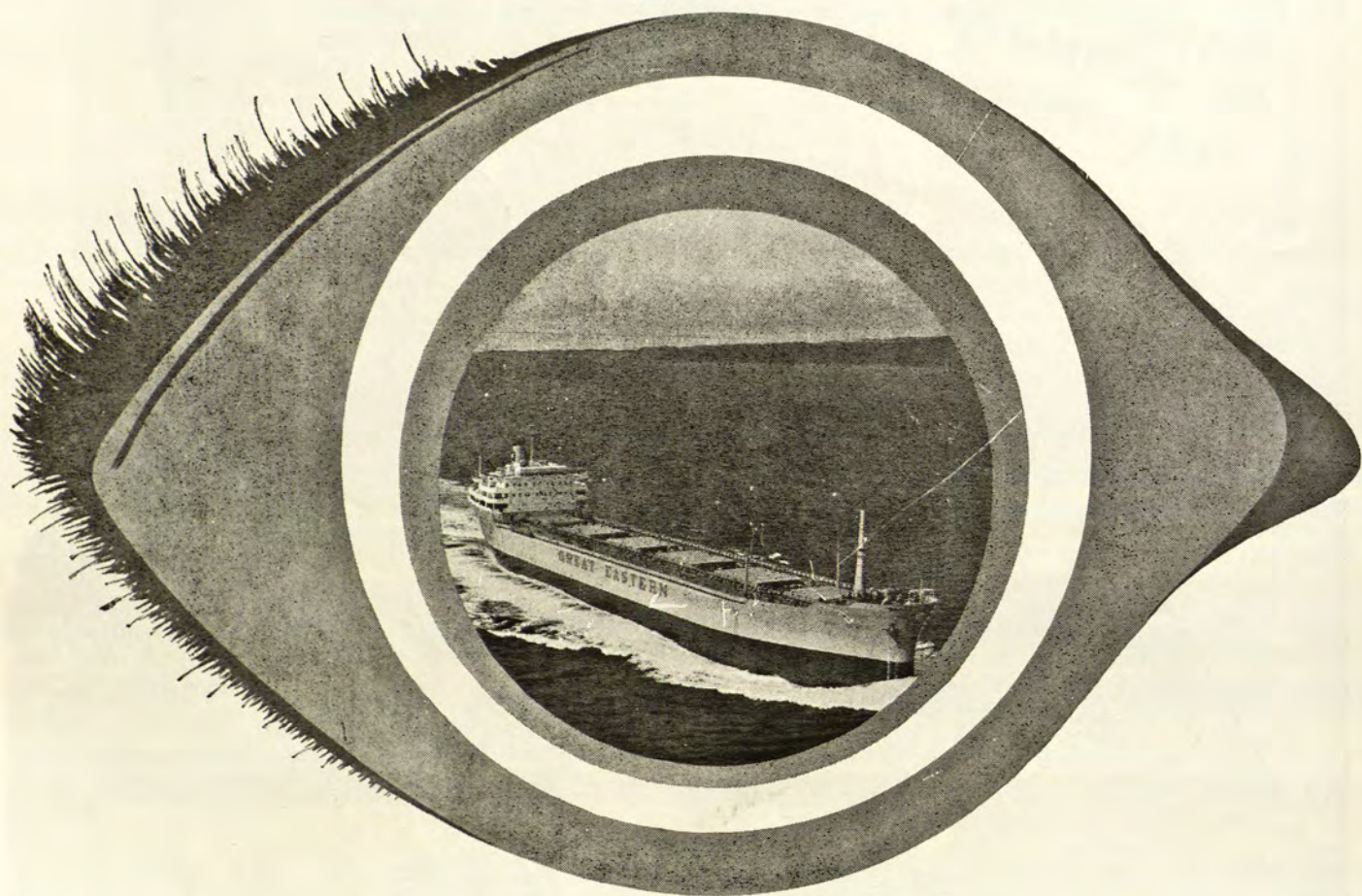
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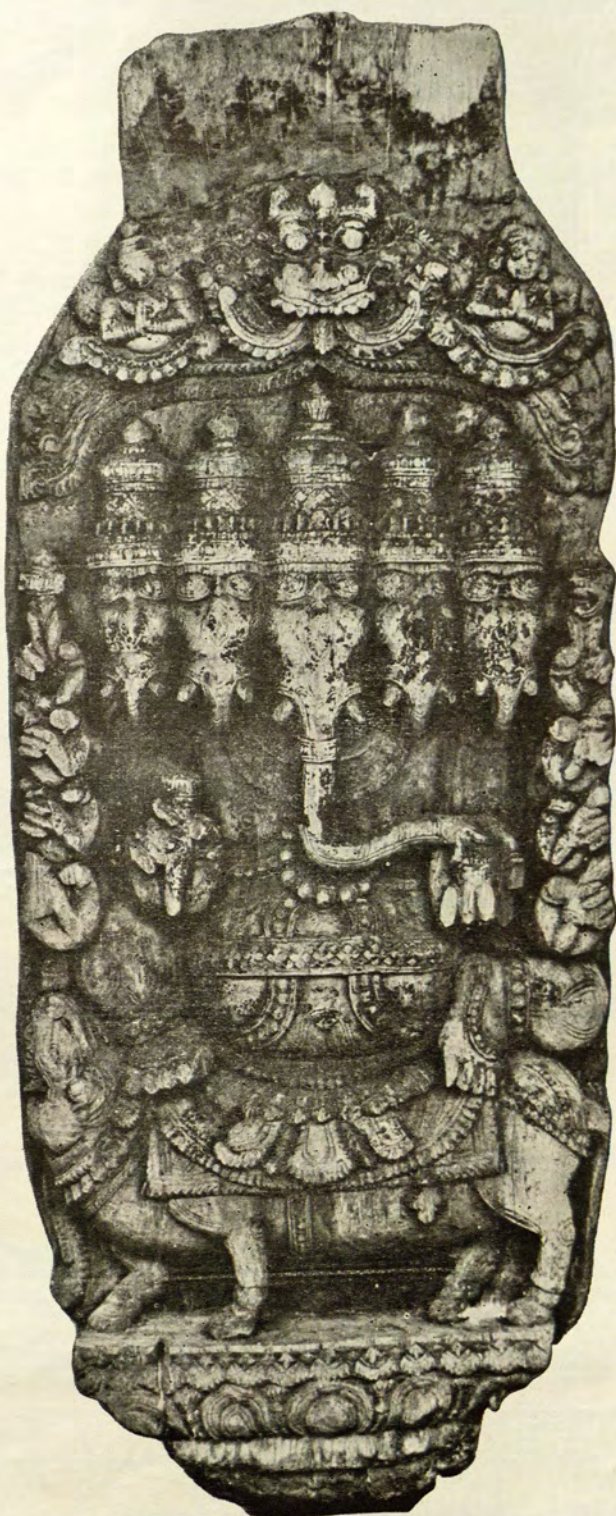
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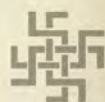
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Then the prompt come-back:
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As you tip your hat
and move on.

Sure!



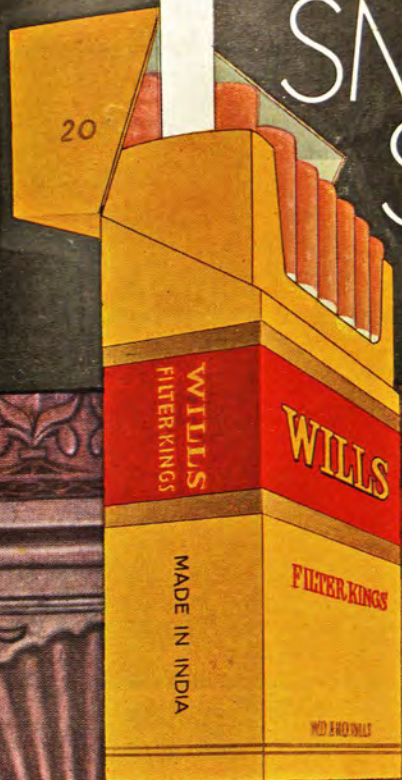
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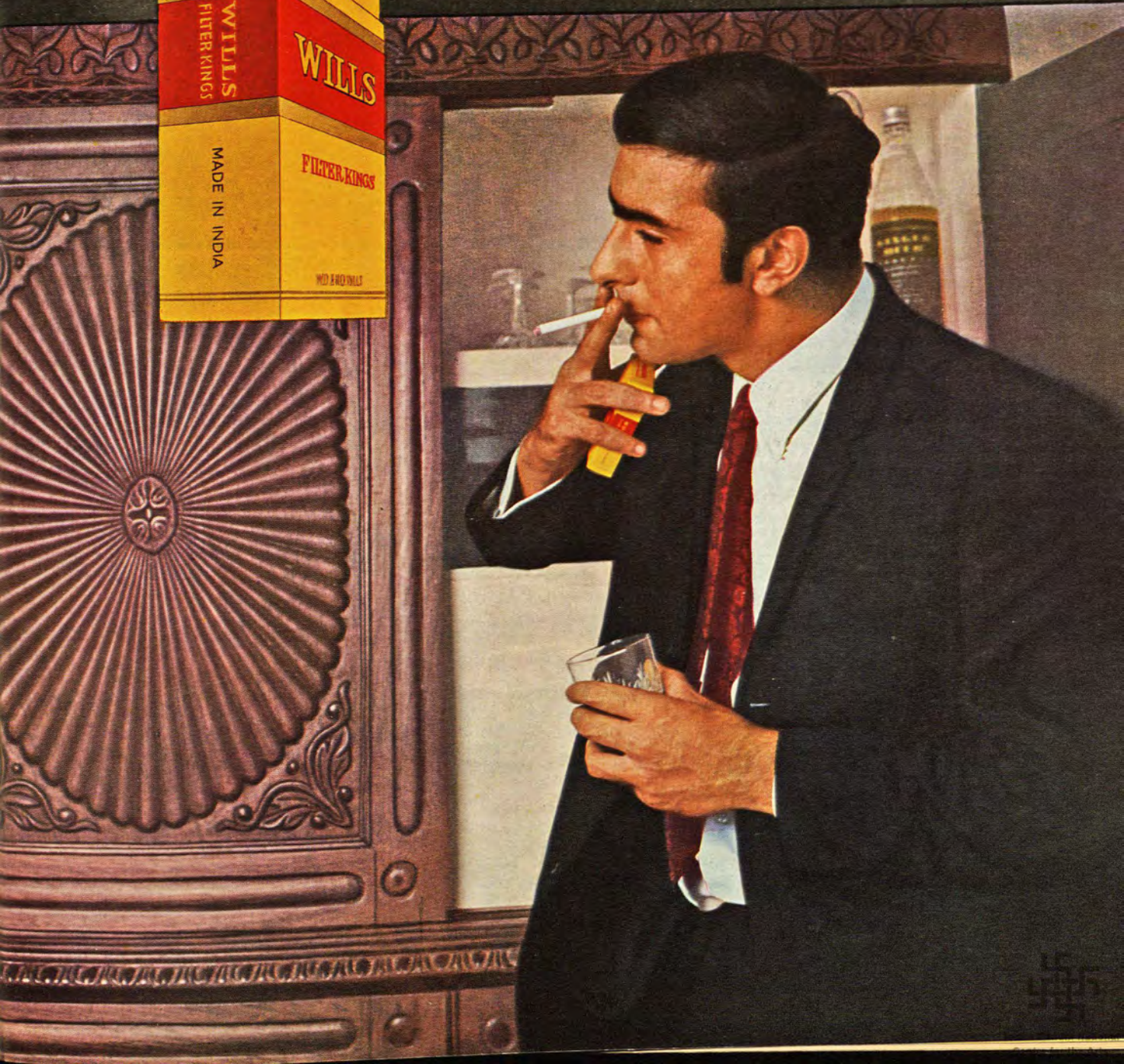
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VOLUME XXIII

SEPTEMBER 1970

NUMBER 4

EDITORIAL

I. 'THE GREAT WRESTLER'——
THE CONTINUITY UNDER MAHAMALLA
by Mulk Raj Anand

II. THE CAVE TEMPLES AND THE RATHAS
UNDER NARASIMHAVARMAN MAHAMALLA
by T. N. Ramachandran

III. THE TEMPLES AND SCULPTURES
UNDER RAJASIMHA :

The lion among kings, the devotee of Shiva and
the lover of scriptures—
The continuity and Rajasimha

Cover : Detail of Goddess Durga from Mahismardini Cave Temple. Colour transparency by Lance Dane.

This second issue of MARG on Mahabalipuram continues the study of the great sculptural tradition initiated by Mahendravarman I, under his successor, Narasimhavarman Mahamalla. The latter was responsible for giving patronage to the scooping of several cave temples, the carving of the Rathas and other important sculptures. The epic style of Mahendravarman became formalised under Mahamalla. This monograph then treats off the various sculptures and the great Shore Temple built under Mahamalla's great grandson, Narasimhavarman II, Rajasimha.

MARG gratefully acknowledges the contribution in photography to this number made by R. R. Bharadwaj, Lance Dane, Miss D. H. Sahiar and the Archaeological Survey of Tamil Nadu.

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"THE GREAT WRESTLER"

THE CONTINUITY UNDER MAHAMALLA

Oh! What a miracle! Mahamalla must have exclaimed when he saw the giant rock carved out on the epic scale into the surface of granite.

And, as he grew up, much favoured by his father, in the glory of his youth as a crown prince, knowing that he would inherit the kingdom extended from Kanchipuram southwards by his 'myriad minded' sire, he secretly nourished the dream of sustaining the achievements of the dynasty, specially of his grandfather Simhavishnu Avanisimha (lion of the earth) and his father Mahendravarman.

The grandfather had been known to have conquered Chola mandalam and vanquished many enemies, including the Kalabaras. He had become sovereign of the lands from lower Karnatac to Kumbakonam. And always he had kept the bard, Bharavi, by his side. Mahamalla felt that he must immortalise the 'lion of the earth', one day, by ordering a portrait sculpture of the grandfather with his two queens, here in Mahabalipuram itself, where Simhavishnu had first wandered.

And then, he, Mahamalla, must celebrate the genius of the *Vichitrachitta*, who had had the courage to rescue victory from defeat at the hands of Pulakesin II, by conquering more territories than he had lost, and by ordering the legendary poem, *Kiratarjuniyam* of Bharavi, carved out from the big rock, already famous for being the biggest sculpture in Bharat. The great Satavahanas in Maharashtra had tried to scoop out caves at Udyagiri in the middle of Bharat, with the giant Varaha Avatar of Vishnu. Their sculptors had attempted reliefs in the cave monasteries of Shudagharh, Bhaja, Karla, Kondane, Bedsa, Nasik, Pithalkora and Ajanta. But no *sthapathis* in the north had achieved the organic unity of rock with the kind of configuration which would inspire the multitudes to devotion, thought and action. The cosmic view of a whole universe in movement, with gods, men, animals, ascetics, nagas and flying spirits, had been conceived by the poet king, his father, the *Chittakari* (temple builder), the *Chitrakarpuli* (tiger among painters), the *Mattavilasa* (the one who knows joy). To be sure, the exalted monarch, his father, did not believe in any god. He had once built temples to Shiva linga in Trichinopoly, in Vallam near Chingleput, in Mahendravadi near Arkonam, and in Dalavanur in South Arcot. He had had excavated the vast tank at Mahendravadi. Then he had mocked at his own belief in Shaivism in his play, *Mattavilas*. Inclined to the Jain faith of non-hurting, later he had turned against the crawling worms, the monks, in order to get away from weakness, despair and death, to keep at bay the Chalukyas who had defeated him. Immersed in Brahminical lore, he had only chosen for himself, from the *Mahabharata*, the one myth which might help him to reinforce his own conscience, and the incipient will of the soldiers. Always, he had wished to teach, in conversation, and through his poems, love of life, dedication to creative works and the vision of a future golden age. He had meant to have excavated the sister rocks near the one inscribed with the Arjuna's Penance.

As he had not lived to see it done, he, Mahamalla, must live up to the name given to him, the 'great wrestler', and struggle to realise the dreams of his sire—why, even extend, if possible, the vision of Narasimhavarman Mahamalla.



Certainly, the eclectic genius of Mahendravarman was inherited by Narasimhavarman Mahamalla. Perhaps he achieved an even more comprehensive outlook. He justified the title of the 'great wrestler' by organising the army, by requisitioning the necessary weapons, and by inspiring his men to go and defeat the defeater of his father, Pulakesin II. In three battles, the last of which was fought at Manimangolam near Kanchi, he humbled the great Chalukya king by capturing the capital of Vatapi (Badami) in A.D. 642. This was a double victory, because Narasimhavarman Mahamalla, not only defeated the conqueror of his father's lands but the monarch who had beaten the unbeatable Harshavardhana, of Thaneshwar and Kanauj. He assumed the title of *Vattapikonda*, the captor of Vatapi.

He was to reinforce a friendly Sinhalese prince, Manovarma, on the throne of Ceylon by sending his ships across from Mahabalipuram in two expeditions to Lanka and thus became a legend to the people of that island.

The paradise of Mahabalipuram seemed thus to become hallowed with memories of creativeness. Because, while all the intensive work of initiating military adventures was continued, the ancestral tradition of carving was sustained.

The resilient mind of these kings, who had enriched their own inner life with music, and dance, as did Mahendravarman, wanted the inner rhythms of these two arts to become visible. And thus they harnessed the prodigious talents of their craftsmen to harmonies in granite.

Narasimhavarman Mahamalla extended the architecture-sculpture of the great rock by ordering the scooping out of the cave temples.

Here, the technique of Udayagiri and the rock temples of the Western Ghats were the prototypes, though the virtuosity of the Gupta renaissance of the previous three centuries was not forgotten.

The mastery, which had been witnessed in embossing the epic of Arjuna's Penance, has been maintained in the cave temples. There is a directness of confrontation here. The design is not elaborate, because the rocks here were different and demanded rectangular divisions, in a formal musical scale, as it were, and not a mushroom growth of teeming forest as on the rock.

The linear rhythm in the figures was now adapted to granite, as a gardener adapts a cultivated patch to certain kinds of flowers. The curved rounded figures thus grow both inside the caves and outside, delighting the eye with decorations, which the fancy of the sculptor arranges with the horse-shoe, the lotus and the globular bubble on top of the pillar. The play of light and shadow from the doorways is calculated to make for depth, but just enough to suggest mystery, without pressing home the urge for withdrawal into esotericism. The clarity of line, the abstract geometry of the division of panels, the attention to form, the disposal of space areas, all evidence to an advance of skill beyond the giant rock, because there is an obvious concentration on the perfection of each space area, for suggestion.

Mahamalla was perhaps more eclectic in his tastes even than his father. He had known the graces of the arts in the court since his youth. And he seemed to prefer the interpenetration of musical patterns into the rock carvings. The character of each temple hinges on its total formal grouping of planes. The architectonic structure includes symmetrical panels, with their shafts of pilasters, with the formal arrangements being relieved by the evolution of nearly abstract cylindrical figures, without adumbration of much detail, exuding a grace which has grown out of the Satavahana concept of generalised carving. The refinement of the planes is throughout obvious and indicates the acceptance of the north Indian models of Sarnath and Ghyrasur and the Andhra perfection of figure. The themes are religious, but those which can be used to indicate the mellow flow of the life principle, rather than the drama of expiation which Mahendravarman had before him. One may say, that the essence of the Mahamalla innovation was the working out of the comprehensive epic vision of his father into the lyric talent of a Kalidasa as against Vyasa—the equivalent of the veena strings, beyond the sound of the drumming on a thousand polished pitchers. And there is a certain effortless ease which lulls us into an imperceptible mood of elation—as we see the same tune permeate each rock-cut shrine.

In the seven Rathas, or wheel temples, carved under the patronage of Mahamalla, we can see the musical scale worked out even more precisely. There is no sense of wonder here behind the shrine. The sacred mystery is not important. The logic beyond explanation has become a physical process. The effects are attained by repetition or reiteration. The senses are lulled as we walk along, by the coming to view of the calm sensual figures of males and females, with the graceful bends.

The damp mists of the morning evaporate. The warm sun conduces to movement in the blood. The eyes scan the tall dandelion-shaped women unfold, in gentle phrases, their docile acceptance of fate. The strains of Karnatic music on the veena find echoes in our hearts.

That is the message of the breathing stone here, in a language without words. The refinement of the tribhargas of women is a deliberate blandishment, following the architectonic principle of music. The magic lies in the playing and not in the tunes.

a. Cave Temple

The impact of the giant rock of Arjuna's Penance, carved under Mahendravarman, was so overwhelming on both Mahamalla and his craftsmen that they had to find some original approach to continue the beginnings of the rock-cut shrines originated by the 'myriad minded'. So while the linear rhythm becomes a kind of binding line with emphasis on the movement of figures started off from the cubes and related to roundels in the Mahamalla period, the musical scale becomes more significant with the repetition of motifs and figures to intensify the reactions of the onlooker. The light and the shadow are also used for contrast to indicate depth.

And the nature of rocks, which were smaller, was kept in view to emphasise finish of figures.

The cave temple for the Trimurti exemplifies the outlook of Mahamalla and his craftsmen in a characteristic manner.

There is a reversion to the techniques of the caves from the Satavahanas, the Vakatakas and Badami. The difference is in the evolution of the cylindrical figure, in continuation of the style of Mahendravarman, as also in the elaboration of the geometry of music.

b. Simhavishnu Pallava and his two Queens.

This token of remembrance was necessary in sheer gratitude to the ancestors. Mahamalla had celebrated his grandfather and the two grandmothers. And, later, he got this portrait of his father and the two mothers.





The heroic body of the male is contrasted to the tender, slim, cylindrical figures of the females, docile and yielding before majesty, who is pointing with the finger of the right hand to the shrine of worship. Against the broad shouldered imperious figure of Mahendravarman, there are the lyres of the two queens, with oval faces, heightened by crowns, small breasts, the lyrical flow of arms and transparently draped legs.





e



c. *The Durga Panel.*

The beginnings made in grouping on the big rock, under Mahendravarman, are also continued under Mahamalla. Only the composition is more integral, because the space area is smaller, the slenderness of the female form is being emphasised again in the figures of the two attendants. The compact nature of the composition in relief shows the genius for integration of detail within the total architectural discipline.

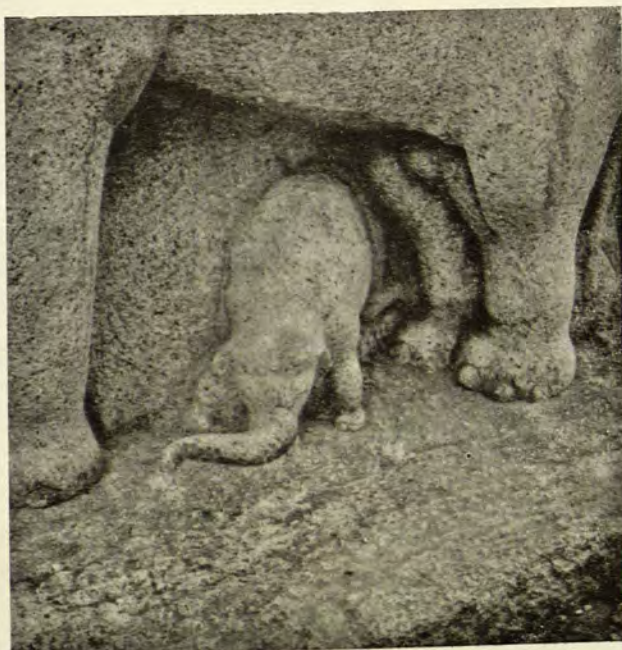
d. *The slender body with the graceful bhanga was perfected and shown off to effect at its most lyrical in the Krishna Mandapa, where the Cowherd God is shown holding mount Govardhana on his straightened left arm above the resilient body.*

e. *The exquisite handling of the Gokula scene of milking the cow, the flute play of Krishna, and Balarama assuring Nanda, are all informed by the spirit of music. The carving is both symbolic and intimate: the tenderness of the cow licking the calf, the mother holding the child, Balarama holding the hands of Nanda, carry the parallelism of the sculptural planes, in tune with the flute, as it were. The attentive bovine heads are studies in transformation of beasts into humanness.*





g



f. There is nowhere in the Mahabalipuram sculpture, the kind of sensuality which Mahendravarman wrote about in the *Mattaavilasa* play. But there is the strange sensuousness of the divine and human couples, with their soft linear rhythms, and pliable bodies melting into each other.

g. The virtuosity of the sculptors in releasing giant elephants from big rocks seems to have been sustained at the highest levels of Mahendravarman's time. The rotundities are clearly contrasted to triangular effects. The flow of the body is recurrent. The dream is clearer. The mood is fixed. The vision is assertive. The incantation to life tends to be slightly formalised, except that the intimacy of the monkey's funny face and the little elephant's playfulness is a counterpoise to the dignity of the noble beast.



h

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h. There is some reason to suppose that the craftsmen of the Deccan were itinerant. The pillars which appear in the cave temples here are stylised in forms, similar to those at Ajanta.

i. One of the most dynamic reliefs under Mahamalla is the fight between Durga riding on the lion and Mahishasura, the demon with the buffalo head. The grouping of the various elements, in this struggle, shows an outstanding genius for composition, of the kind which releases the energies of stone into all directions and makes space and time eternal. The carved portion of the rock becomes a symbolic microcosm of the uncarved microcosm of the rock in which the energies are awaiting to be released.



CAVE TEMPLES AND RATHAS UNDER NARASIMHA VARMAN MAHAMALLA

Having considered the big relief of *Arjuna's penance* which we have attributed to Mahendravarman I (A.D. 580-630), we will now take up the cut-in Cave Temples of Mahabalipuram in typical Mahendra style. On the evidence of inscriptions there are eight cave temples attributable to Mahendravarman I (A.D. 580-630). They are the cave temples of Mandagappattu, Pallavaram, the larger cave temple of Mamandur, the cave temple of Kuranganilmuttam, the larger cave temple of Vallam, the cave temple of Mahendravadi, the smaller cave of Mamandur I, the upper cave of Trichinopoly, the cave temples of Siyamangalam and Dalavanur. Since the *Mahendra style* of cave temples continued to be excavated even after Mahendravarman I, it will fall under three periods. The first period includes all authentic cave temples of Mahendra and those to be assigned to his time on stylistic grounds. They are those of Mandagappattu, Pallavaram, Kuranganilmuttam, Mamandur II, Vallam, Mahendravadi, Mamandur I, Dalavanur, Tiruchirapalli, Siyamangalam and Vilappakkam. In general the characteristic features of Cave temples of Mahendra I are the simplicity of plan and decoration, less sculpture and the size and shape of their main pillars. Often, in addition to the row of pillars on the facade, there is a second parallel row in the *mandapa* dividing it into two, the *ardha-mandapa* and the *mukha-mandapa*. When this dividing row of pillars is absent the above demarcation is indicated by difference in the floor level of the two sections. The pillars are divided into square or cubical sections on top and base with an octagonal section in between. Large lotus-like medallions decorate sometimes the cubical parts while the corbels on the top are simple heavy blocks with a terminal chamfer resulting in a curved (or angular) profile.

In the later examples of Mahendra the curved corbel-arms are decorated by roll mouldings called *tarangas* or waves. The shrine-cells are cells cut behind the *mandapas*. They do not contain any bas-relief sculpture of the deity on the back wall or on the centre of its floor, not even rock-cut *lingas*, if they happen to be Siva temples. There are rock-cut holes cut in the centre of the floor. Installed *lingas* in black polished stone of uncertain date are often found inserted in these rock-cuts, sometimes with *yoni*. The only sculptures are of *Dvarapals* flanking the *mandapa* facade or the shrine entrance. The *Dvarapals* are two-armed, and face front, with or without clubs, one of each pair, in some Siva Cave-temples having two curved horns behind the head-dress. There are also some sculptures on the lateral walls of the *mandapa* as in Trichinopoly upper cave or on the facade pillars as in Siyamangalam. *Makara*-and *stambha-toranas* are also in evidence in some as in Dalavanur and Siyamangalam. The *makara* designs are *matanganakras*, elephant mouth with fish-tail, as Kalidasa has called them, whose origin is as early as Sanchi stupas (first Century B.C.), if not earlier.

The second period would include cave temples of the above model assignable to the reigns of Mamalla, Mahendra II, Paramesvaravarman I and Rajasimha. Such are those of Tirukkalik-kunram, Singaperumal koil, Singavaram, Melaccheri, the fourth and third cave temples at Mamandur, and coming to Mahabalipuram, Kotikkal mandapam, Dharmaraja mandapam and Atiranachanda mandapam at Saluvankuppam. To the third period are to be assigned smaller excavations in Tondaimandalam such as the cave cell at Kilnavilangai, and lower and northern cave temples at Vallam hill. In this period very few such cave temples seem to have been done in view of the increased activity in structural stonework.



This is a little to the south-west of the Trimurti Cave and a large circular monolithic cistern called the 'Gopi's churn'. This cave temple consists of a shrine and its *ardha-mandapa*, and perhaps had a structural *mukha-mandapa*. In typical Mahendra style is its facade with the corbels on the top of pillars of the plain bevelled type with an angular profile. The shrine front has the architectural features and mouldings of a structural temple. Two shallow oblong niches on either side of the jamb contain in them two *dvarapalika*s in the frontal aspect in bas-relief. (Fig. 18.) Though similar to each other in decoration they differ in their poses and the weapons they carry. The northern *dvarapalika* stands with her legs crossed, her left elbow resting on a shield plate and her right hand holding a sword. The southern *dvarapalika* in *tribhanga* has her left arm in *katyavalambita* pose and with her right hand is holding a bow on which she is leaning, an impression created by planting the bow in front of her vertically, the lower end of which she holds firmly by her right toe. A *sopana* or balustrade of three steps with a moon-stone (*Chandrasila*) below leads to the shrine which was clearly dedicated to Durga though there is no image or indication to that effect. As there is no sculpture of the principal deity in the shrine-cell, writers have presumed that evidently it was a painting or stucco relief. The overhanging cornice (*kapota*) over the shrine entrance has *kudu* (larmier) arches though without the figureheads inside, which indicates later Mahendra period while the *dvarapalika* figures are superficially similar to those occurring on the *Draupadi-Ratha*. On the southern front pillar is a Pallava-grantha inscription in 7th century script reading as "Sri Vamankusa". Can it be the title of a vasa of Pallava Mahendra I, who excavated this temple? This title was borne by one of the Telugu-Chola kings of the 7th century A.D. who ruled Renadu and Mundareshtra. They often bore titles similar to those of the Chalukyas or the Pallavas according to their allegiance. The Muttaraiyars around Tanjore did the same. But 'Ankusa' sounds more as a Chalukyan name. We can also compare a later Telugu-Chola King Chola Maharaja *Kumarankusa* in the time of Nandivarman Pallavamalla and also Ballaya Chola of the Karikala family who bore the title "Kumarankusa".

DHARMARAJA MANDAPAM OR ATYANTAKAMA-PALLAVESVARAGRIHAM

At the southern end of Mahabalipuram hill, below the Lighthouse and the Mahishasuramardini cave, is this cave temple facing east, in Mahendra style (Period II). The facade presents two pillars, cubical above and below, with octagonal belt in between. They are plain and lack lotus medallions that we see at Siyamangalam, Dalavanur, Mahendravadi and Tiruchirapalli. The corbels are massive with sharply bevelled ends and angular profiles. On the back wall of the *ardha-mandapa*, we can notice three shrines. On either side of the central door way is an oblong niche, one on either side with sculptures of *dvarapalas* which have been chiselled off plumb with the surface of the wall by the Vaishnava occupants of this cave temple at a later period. The shape of the *dvarapalas* can be defined easily from what remains, as facing front, two-armed, one arm folded in and the other placed on the hip (*kati*). Both appear to have had *yajnopavita* in *nivita* fashion—or thrown over the right arm. All the three cells are empty with no traces of relief work on the back walls. There has been much speculation regarding the authorship of this cave temple being variously assigned to Mahendra typologically and to a Mamalla because of its location in Mamallapuram. But an inscription in this temple supplies the clue to its dating and authorship. It is in Sanskrit, the script being Pallava *grantha* and gives the name of the temple as *Atyantakama Pallavesavaragriham*. There are eleven verses in it in praise of Siva and the following titles of the king "Atyantakama Pallava" identified with Paramesvaravarman I read as *Srinidhi*, *Sribhara*, *Ranajaya*, *Tarunankura* and *Kamaraja*. The temple is styled *Venma*, *mandira-griha* and *Isvara-griha*.

The inscription concludes with the usual imprecatory verse cursing six times people in whose hearts there is no place for Rudra, who diverts people from walking on the evil path.* This verse is obviously of temple ritual music, timed and meant to be sung to the accompaniment of *Kottimaddalam* drum. The same verse-inscription with the name *Atyantakama* is found on the *Ganesa-ratha* and the same imprecatory verse is found in the Ramanuja mandapam and the Adivaraha cave temple. Writers have believed that King Paramesvaravarman I (A.D. 672-700) made all the three types of temples that his predecessors Mahendra and Mamalla had initiated, namely, *Dharmaraja-mandapam* which is a Mahendra type cave temple, *Ramanuja mandapam* which is a cave temple of the Mamalla type and *Ganesa-ratha* which is a *ratha* or monolithic *vimana*. The same king Paramesvaravarman initiated in the Siva temple at Kuram a new method of constructing structural temples with cut stone slabs. Judging from the the absence of any sculpture in the central sanctum this may be taken as the earliest of Paramesvaravarman I. The term *Isvara-griha* indicates that the main deity in the central shrine was Siva in one of his forms and not a *linga*. The temple was perhaps originally intended for the *Trimurti*. This cave temple has no pit or socket at the centre of the shrine-floor and continued so till the Vaishnavas occupied it some time between the 13th and 19th centuries A.D. If at all there was a

* Dhik tesham Dhik tesham punarapi Dhig Dhig Dhigashe Dhik tesham I
Yeshan na vasati hridaye Kupathagativimokshako Rudrah II

subsequent installation of the *linga* before the Vaishnavas occupied it, it was placed with its *Yoni* over the floor and not with the base of the *linga* inserted into a socket on the floor. That the Vaishnavas occupied it as also Ramanuja-mandapam is clear by the engraving on the facade of Vishnu's *Chakra* and *sankha*.

ATIRANACHANDA—PALLAVESVARAGRIHAM

This cave temple in Mahendra style (Period II) lies in Saluvankuppam, 3 miles north of Mamallapuram. Its pillars and pilasters have corbels with curved profile and bold *taranga*-ornamentation of roll-mouldings. Over the facade are two Pallava-*Grantha* labels calling this cave temple *Atiranachanda-Pallavesvaragriham*. On the lateral surface on either side of the pilasters at the end are two inscriptions of the same contents but in different scripts, *Nagari* on the north, Pallava-*Grantha* on the south where it is incomplete. The ceiling inside was not finished as also the shrine behind the *mandapa*. The shrine was curved out on the model of a square *vimana*. The front wall of the shrine is relieved by four pilasters which enclose two niches flanking the entrance to the central cell. The niches show *dvarapalas* in shallow relief. The cell contains a black sixteen-fluted *linga* planted into a hole on the floor with the *yonis* slipped over it. On the back wall is a bas-relief of Somaskanda flanked by Vishnu and Brahma. Siva, Uma and Skanda are seated on a throne with a parasol spread in the background. Two similar Somaskanda reliefs can be noticed on either side of the shrine entrance on the back wall of the *ardha-mandapa* with two more polished fluted *lingas* in *yonis* being placed in front of him. Though we remarked that in plan and style, this temple is of the Mahendra type yet it differs in its pillars which are slender, taller and flatter while their fluted corbels are of good proportions. The carving of Somaskanda panel in the shrine and the subsequent installation of the fluted type or *dharalinga* are characteristics of the period of Rajasimha and his successors. Thus this cave temple appears to have been named by Rajasimha after one of his own titles "Atiranachanda". The two Sanskrit inscriptions which are copies of the same, though in two different contemporary scripts, are of untold importance announcing as they do, its authorship by "Atiranachanda" who excavated it as the abode for Siva with Uma, Skanda and the *ganas*. The Pallava-*grantha* inscription on the southern flank is in seventeen lines and the *Nagari* on the northern flank is in sixteen lines. Six principal verses are common to both. There is however a seventh verse in the Pallava-*Grantha* version praising the musical talents of the composer, Kalakala. From an inscription in the Kailasanatha Temple of Queen Rangapataka, we learn that Kalakala was a surname of Rajasimha himself. The first and second verses are identical with the eighth and ninth verses of Atyantakama's inscriptions in the Dharmaraja-mandapam and Ganesa-ratha. The fourth verse is identical with the fourth of the two inscriptions of Atyantakama. There are thus three new verses, not repetitions, whose content-value is untold and they are the third, fifth and sixth. They are,

- Verse 3. Ten-edam karitam sambhor bhavanam bhutaye bhuvah |
Kailasa Mandara nibham bhubhritam murdhni tishtata ||
- Verse 5. Atiranachandak patir avanibhujam Atiranachandesvaram idamakarot |
Iha Giritanaya Guha ganasahito niyaktaratarir bhavatu Pasupatih ||
- Verse 6. Gurvim sanabhakhim sriyam atisayinim durvham bharam urvya |
Nissamanyancha danam samam Atiranachandakhyaya yo bibharti ||

"Bhavanam" in the inscription indicates the temple which is likened to Mts. Kailasa and Mandara. Along with Meru, Kailasa and Mandara are two traditional types of *Vimanas*. In these verses there is clear reference to the Somaskanda sculpture on the back wall of the shrine for they say that the temple Atiranachandesvaram was cut by Atiranachanda for Siva with 'Giritanaya' and 'Guha' and attendant *ganas*. The verses also say that *ashta-murti*, the eight-formed Siva, may dwell in this abode for long. The eight forms of Siva are the five elements and Surya, Chandra and Yajamana (Lord). The Lord of the eight elements are Bhava, Sarva, Isana, Pasupati, Bhima, Mahadeva (or Mahatordeva), Ugra and Rudra. This *ashtamurta*-form of Siva is attested to by the Tamil Nayanars, Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manickavachakar. Since most of the titles including *Atiranachanda*, such as *Atyantakama*, *Srinidhi*, *Sribhara*, *Dhananjaya*, *Kamaraja* and *Sangramadhira* mentioned in the verses are also found in the Kanchipuram inscription of Rajasimha, this inscription is also of Rajasimha. Titles such as *Atiranachanda*, the *dharalinga* in addition and the Somaskanda panel confirm this attribution. There is not much force in the theory adduced by some that this temple was perhaps started in the time of Mahendra I or Mamalla but completed or consecrated after three or four reigns by Rajasimha. We have to stress that this is a clear instance that in Pallava cave temples of the time of Mahendra the *linga* was not cut out of the same rock, that it was installed later perhaps from Rajasimha's period and Rajasimha introduced very late in his time polished fluted *lingas* in front of Somaskanda panels on the back walls of the *garbha-griha*.

We notice a tall polished *linga* without fluting planted in the sands in front of the temple. Longhurst surmised that it was the original *linga* of this temple discarded at the time of the



subsequent installation of the fluted *linga*. It cannot be so as it is of greater height to go into the shrine and also is not appropriate with the Somaskanda panel behind. Perhaps it belonged to a structural temple nearby now in ruins, the stones of which are now spread on the floor of this cave temple. A group of *Sapta-matrika* sculptures noticed in a shed nearby might have belonged to the structural temple.

In front of the cave temple, a few feet away 'on' a small boulder, we notice a bas-relief panel, 6' x 3', showing Mahishasuramardini (Fig. 19), differing in detail from the famous Mahishasuramardini panel for which Mahabalipuram is noted (Fig. 21a). Here Mahishasuramardini is either mounting or dismounting a roaring lion. Her right leg rests on a *padma* while her left knee is raised in *parsvajanu*, the whole bodily frame of the Devi being flexioned in *tryalidha*. The Devi has six arms holding *sankha*, *chakra*, bow, arrow, sword and shield. Below the lion a *gana* strikes Mahishasura who is on the run. Above his head is a *gana* striking with a sword. His lieutenant, also an *asura* is in front of Mahishasura beating retreat, hotly pursued by a *gana*. Behind Devi are four more *ganas* one with a sword and shield, another with a parasol, a third brandishing a club and a fourth blowing a conch with pouted mouth. The style of carving is similar to that of Durga from panamalai (Fig. 19b) and the Somaskanda groups inside the Ahiranachandesvara temple and consequently this sculpture is also of the time of Rajasimha (A. D. 700-728).

THE MAMALLA STYLE (A.D. 630-668)

The Mamalla style of cave temples initiated by Narasimhavarman I alias Mamalla persisted only for two generations after him and revealed some new features in cave architecture such as a fuller representation of the *mandapa* in its frontal and interior aspects making the stone copies true to their structural originals, the pillars assuming elegant, taller, slender, and proportionate forms in contrast to the simple, four-sided, and often unornamented pillars of Mahendra style. In other words, the Mamalla pillars may be said to conform to the same proportions as contemporary carvings of wooden pillars with all the members of the 'order' reproduced, namely, *kalasa*, *tadi*, *kantha*, *khumba*, *padma* and *phalaka*. The shafts are circular and sixteen-faceted, and are further embellished by decorative motifs such as *madhya-bandha*, *padma-bandha* and by *patra-lata* or *kodikkarukku* on the corners of the capital-members. The corbels are not as large as the corbels of the Mahendra type and have a curved profile often with the *taranga* roll-mouldings with a median *patta* or band. The bases of the pillars are frequently shaped like squatting lions or *vyalas*. As monolithic *vimanas* were also being carved out side by side with these cave temples, in which all the three dimensions of the *vimanas* with all their details were presented, the elevation of a string of three shrines placed side by side could be presented even as the elevation of the *mandapa*. Noteworthy example is the Trimurti Cave (Fig. 20) at Mahabalipuram in which the reproduction of the *hara* over the *prastara* with *karnakutas* (miniature square shrines) and *bhadhra-sala* (oblong wagon-topped miniature shrines) in between is remarkable. *Hamsa* or *Bhuta*-frieze of the *valabhi* course, marking the decorated ends of the joists projected over the beam and the *vyala* frieze marking the ends of the joists of the roof over the *kapota* characterised the Mamalla style and are not found in the Mahendra cave temples. They are noticeable in the *rathas* also. There are ten examples of this style all in Mahabalipuram, three of which are half-finished. The *Koneri mandapam* (Fig. 25), which is five-celled, marks the beginning of the Mamalla series by combining features of both Mahendra and Mamalla styles. They are devoid of sculptural reliefs of the principal deities inside the shrines while the later examples have them. The Mahishasuramardini cave temple (Fig. 21) though it has a sculpture of Somaskanda in the shrine (Fig. 22), architecturally comes next. In it the pillars are simple but without lion or *vyala* bases. The pillars of its inner porch have lion-bases and herald their advent as a characteristic of Mamalla style. These occur however on the facade pillars of the *Varaha-mandapam* (Fig. 23) which comes next in the order. As it has no sculpture of a deity inside the sanctum, it was completed perhaps even in Mamalla's time but earlier than the Mahishasuramardini cave. The Adivaraha cave temple with its outer row of *vyala*-pillars and absence of sculpture in the shrine would mark its completion early in Paramesvaravarman's reign (A.D. 672-700). Internal evidence shows that it was commenced late in the reign of Mamalla, continued through his successor's short period and was finally completed by Paramesvaravarman I. The *Ramanuja-mandapam* (Fig. 24) has pillars with lion-bases and Somaskanda bas-relief in the *sanctum* and an inscription of Paramesvaravarman I in it—all showing that it entirely belongs to the time of Paramesvaravarman I. The *Trimurti* cave temple shows the front elevation of *vimanas* and contains sculptures inside the shrines and, unique enough, shows the *kuta* (shrine of square plan) in the *hara* for the first time. This has to be attributed to Paramesvaravarman I. The *Panchapandava* cave temple though unfinished has a finished facade having *kuta* in the *hara* (string) and advanced features in the form of lion-caryatids on its capitals and has to be assigned to Paramesvaravarman I. The *Yalimandapam* is a type by itself and assignable to Rajasimha as indicated by rampant *vyalas* at the base of the pilasters. There are two more unfinished *mandapas* with lion pillars or pilasters and without the *hara* over the facade which mark the decadence of Mamalla style.

KONERI MANDAPAM (Fig. 25)

A five-celled cave temple excavated on the western flank of the main hill with an almost vertical scarp overlooking the *Koneri-pallam* tank is called *Koneri-mandapam*, and not an unfinished excavation to the north of this, beyond the limits of the tank which many writers including Sri Sivaramamurti in his guide have mistakenly called so. The pillars, corbels and beam are more slender and elegant than those of the Mahendra style. Columnation is also wider. Behind the facade pillars is a narrow oblong *mukha-mandapa* with its floor raised 5 feet above the present ground level and reached by a flight of four rock-steps. Behind the *mukha-mandapa* is another row of four pillars and two pilasters on a line with those of the front row but differing in shape and features. The four pillars are cylindrical and mounted on plinths. The shafts are polygonal (sixteen fluted) and decorated by a floral *madhya-bandha* at their middle. The presence of the Mahendra type of pillars on the facade and fully formed pillars with capitals and corbels with median *patta* in the inner row mark the transition from the Mahendra to the Mamalla series. Behind the pillars is the *ardha-mandapa* with no sculptures in it. Cut out from the back wall of the *ardha-mandapa* is a row of five shrine-fronts mounted on a continuous *adhishtana* with however the central and extreme shrine fronts projected and the two intermediate ones recessed all with fully developed mouldings from base to cornice. On either side of each shrine entrance are bas-reliefs of *dvarapalas* in shallow niches, differing in details from one another though forming regular pairs. The southern *dvarapala* has two curved horns behind the head-dress, and this being absent in the case of the northern one, helps to identify the former as Nandi. The projecting central shrine has a different pair of *dvarapalas* more like royal figures with *kirita-makutas* and *vanamala*. Over the *kapota* of the shrines runs a *vyala-vari* or *vyala-mala*, the carving of which shows different stages of completion. The shrine entrances lack jambs, lintels and sills. The cells inside are more oblong than cubical and the floors have sockets for *lingas* with an outer circular groove for the *yonis*. The sockets are obviously later as they are shallow and the *yonis* is not found in earlier Pallava cave-temples. On the back walls are cut niches perhaps to fit into them Somaskanda in wood or some such bas-reliefs or fill them by stucco figures or painted panels of the concerned deities. As all the *dvarapalas* suggest Saiva-shrines this cave temple was evidently dedicated to Siva in his five aspects—Isana, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Vamadeva and Sadyojata. We are strengthened in this surmise as the second shrine from the north and the central one contains a horned *dvarapala* in the pair. A proper distribution of the five aspects of Siva would be Sadyojata in the central shrine, Isana and Tatpurusha in the northern and southern shrines respectively and Vamadeva and Aghora in the northern and southern recessed shrines. When this temple was occupied by Vaishnavites later on, Vaishnava symbols were engraved on the facade and Saiva vestiges destroyed. Though no inscriptions exist here to help in dating it, the cave temple may be treated as a transition-form assignable to the early period of Mamalla. We are confirmed in this as in addition to some features characteristic of the Mahendra style it shows some advanced features as found in the *rathas* and cave temples of the Mamalla style.

VARAHA MANDAPA CAVE TEMPLE (Fig. 23)

Close-by to the south-west of the Ganesa-ratha and behind Arjuna's penance is this cave temple, a fine specimen of the Mamalla type with an attractive frontage. This cave has been supposed to be a sculptural echo of Mamalla's conquest of Badami then called Vatapi where he has left an inscription reading as "Thena Mahamallena Vidvisham Vatapir-atima.....tayah kshiti-bhujam agresarah Pallavah.....Vishnurapi yah sthambanjaya"—which furnishes epigraphic evidence for Mamalla's expedition to Badami in which the Saiva Saint Siruttondar *alias* Paranjyoti served as a general. This inscription serves as the foundation on which a lot of research has been built by writers, some of whom hold the view that Narasimhavarman I founded Mahabalipuram and named it after his title "Mahamalla" mentioned in the Badami inscription and the place was not in existence before his time. This view has been contradicted by others. We find that the Varaha and Trivikrama incarnations of Vishnu are the subjects chosen by sculptors both at Badami and Mahabalipuram. At Badami workmanship is rather crude. Narasimhavarman who saw these sculptures there evinced interest and should have asked his own sculptors to chisel the same subjects at Mahabalipuram. His sculptors excelled their Chalukyan brothers in the representation of the same subjects. The ornamentations that Mamalla introduced in his pillars were probably after observing the pillars in the Badami caves. The hall at the front has two lion pillars and two pilasters. Beyond this is the shrine cell, oblong, guarded by two *dvarapalas*. There are four panels representing Varaha raising earth from the ocean wherein she was submerged, Gajalakshmi seated on lotus bathed by elephants, Durga with four arms and Trivikrama taking three strides and overcoming Bali. A remarkable feature of the zoo anthropomorphic form in the Varaha panel (Fig. 23a) is that the snout of the boar has been modelled with dexterity and the head has been so imperceptibly juxtaposed on the neck that it blends in a natural way with the human contour of the figure, a feature paralleled only in one place in Mamallapuram and that is the Mahishasura in the Mahishasuramardini cave temple. The depiction of Vishnu as Bhu-Varaha follows the iconography

of *Vaikhanasagama*. Vishnu has four arms and is lifting earth in the form of a goddess with his right arm thrown round her hip and the left arm holding her right leg, the pose in which she was lifted up from the lower world which is indicated by a five hooded *Seshanaga*. Two other arms of Vishnu (the upper ones) hold conch and discus. Vishnu's right leg which is lifted up in *urdhvajanu* is placed on the serpent hood of *Seshanaga*, who emerges from out of lotus leaves and ripples which clearly represent the water region. The idea is that Vishnu is emerging from water. On Vishnu's uplifted right knee is seated *Bhudevi*. Devi's *uttariya* hangs elegantly on her thigh. To the left of Vishnu is *Brahma* with three heads (the three heads visible in front, the fourth being behind), all with *jatamakuta* and *Brahma* is carrying a *kamandalu* more probably *Ajya-patra* and a ladle. Behind *Brahma* is a bearded ascetic wrongly identified by writer *Gopinatha Rao* as *Narada*. What he holds in his right hand has been mistaken to be a *vina* which it does not appear to be. A heavenly being is hovering above *Brahma*, who may be *Chandra* shown as emerging from the clouds with his hands in *anjali*. On the opposite side is shown *Surya* with a halo behind his head also as emerging from the clouds and with his hands in *anjali*. In front of *Varaha* and *Seshanaga* is shown a worshipping lady with her hands in *anjali*. She has been mistaken to be *Bhudevi* supplicating before *Varaha* to lift her up, as a prelude. Since her ornaments and dress are not identical with those of *Bhudevi* shown seated on *Varaha's* right knee she is probably the consort of *Seshanaga* also emerging like her lord from lotus leaves and ripple. Like *Seshanaga* she is also not visible below her knee. The figure behind the *nagini* appears to be more a *rishi* than *Siva* as some writers have held. He is not *Siva*, for, like *Brahma* on the other side he is not four handed but has only two arms. Also he is bowing down with hands in *anjali*. We can only take him and the other figure on the opposite side to be worshippers of the *rishi* class, like *Bhrigu*, etc. There is no warrant for taking either for *Narada* though sufficiently tempting. We say tempting because it has led the same group of writers (*T. A. Gopinatha Rao* and *K. R. Srinivasan*) to identify what appears as a vertical object below *Surya* as a *vina* placed vertically in front of the *rishi*-like figure. Other writers like *Longhurst* have identified it as a long *cornucopia*, to substantiate which, they have referred to the legend which is an allegory of the return of plenty on earth after a spell of famine, when the sustaining power had disappeared from the face of the earth. It is neither a *vina* nor a *cornucopia* as it lacks the shape of either. Those that have closely observed sculptural representations of the *Naga Kaliya* subdued by *Krishna* will readily identify the vertical object as the uplifted tail-end of *Seshanaga*. It will thus be quite clear that the sculptor has here attempted narrative rendering of art within the limitations of three dimensions.

Facing the *Varaha* panel is the *Trivikrama* panel (Fig. 23b) where Vishnu is represented as *Trivikrama* exactly as the *Vaikhanasagama* describes the event. The demon king *Bali*, grandson of *Prahlada*, the boy saint, who from out of his intense devotion caused Vishnu to come out of a pillar in the form of *Narasimha*, the man-lion, became powerful and as his power increased, started oppressing the celestials who sought from Vishnu protection and safety. Vishnu was born to *Kasyapa* and *Aditi*, as a dwarf, hence called *Vamana* and adopting the mendicant's role approached *Bali* for a curious *dana* which consisted of nothing more than three feet of earth. *Bali* who was noted for his generosity granted the boon. No sooner did he agree than the dwarfish *Vamana* grew into a mighty figure and with one step measured earth. With the second he measured heaven and immediately asked *Bali* as to where he should place the third. *Bali* offering his own head, *Trivikrama* pressed him with his foot with the result that *Bali* went with all his brood to the neither world leaving the upper regions for the celestials. In Tamil literature also this legend receives a prominent place. *Valluvar* in his *Tirukkural*, a didactic masterpiece, while describing activity as distinguished from laziness refers to this legend and cites as example

Madiyila mannavanaidu Madiyalandan
Raayadellamorungu. 61-10.

"A king who is not lazy will acquire the whole world measured by the Creator's foot". The Sangam work *Manimekhalai* also refers to this legend as—

Nediyon Kuraluruvagi nimivinduta nadiyir
padiyaiyadakkujavannal. (XIX-51-52)

This legend was as much popular at the dawn of Tamil literature as it was at the dawn of Vedic literature. *Rigveda* (I-155-2) refers to the *Trivikrama* that Vishnu performed which carved for him the title *Pravishnu* and the role of a *sthavira*. This legend is equally popular in English epic poetry of early 19th century as Southey's "Curse of Kenama" shows. In the panel *Trivikrama* stands firmly with his right leg planted on the ground and left leg raised to the level of his forehead which shows that the God has already measured twice transcending the bounds of earth and beyond. It may be mentioned parenthetically that upto the knee of *Trivikrama* is *Bhuloka*, above it is *Antariksha* upto the navel, and above it is *Svarga* upto the forehead. With eight arms and one leg lifted up the figure appears normal and impressive. Three of his arms hold as the *Vaikhanasagama* demands, *chakra*, *gada* and sword, while the fourth is held up with the palm upturned. The left hands carry *sankha*,

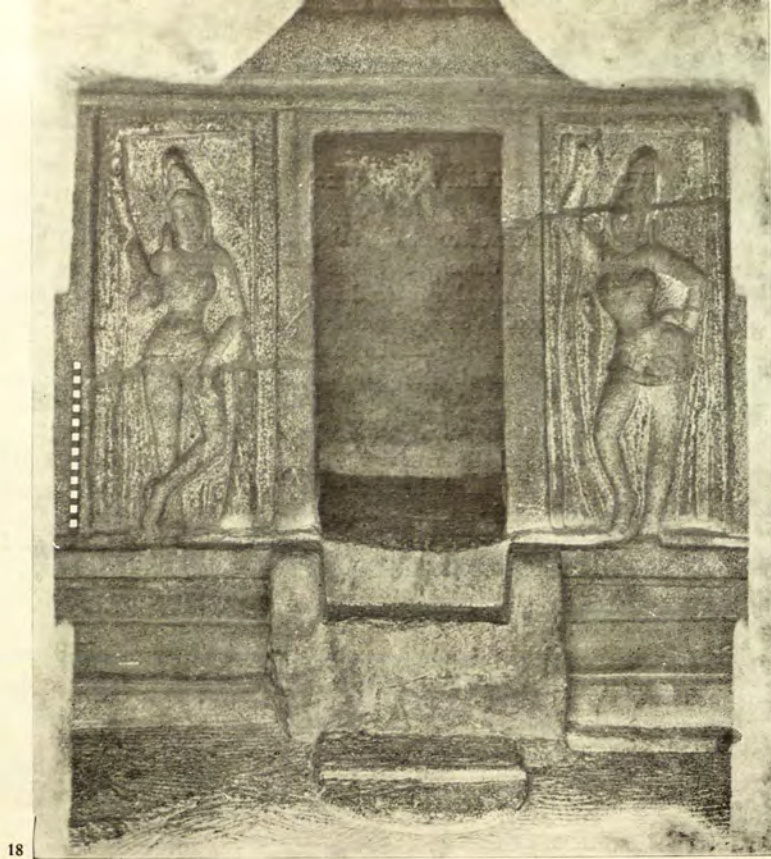
shield and bow respectively while the fourth is stretched towards his uplifted leg and pointing with the finger beyond the foot as demanded by *Vaikhāṇasagāma*. Brahma, four-armed, adores the uplifted foot of Vishnu by washing it (*arghya*). At the other end of the panel is four-armed Siva with one of his hands in the attitude of praise. Both Brahma and Siva being on a line with the forehead of Trivikrama indicate their celestial location. Between Trivikrama and Brahma, high up in the sky, Jambavan with a bear's face rejoices over the event by beating a drum (*bheri*) with one hand and raising the other in adoration. A figure falling in mid-air is Trisanku who as we know belonged neither to earth nor heaven and his position suggests that the foot of Vishnu reached the celestial region beyond that of Trishanku, who is supposed to occupy mid-air. The sky region is further indicated by Surya and Chandra with halos round their heads, hovering on either side of Trivikrama at the level of his *nabhi*. Surya is below Siva and Chandra is below Brahma. Earlier writers including Gopinatha Rao had mistaken Trisanku for one of the Danavas referred to in the *Bṛahmaṇḍa-Purāṇa* as hurled into the air and thrown down by the momentum of growing Vishnu (*Viśvarūpa*). Mamalla, as a conqueror of Vatapi was inspired by the *Chakravartin* concept as were the Guptas and the Chalukyas who depicted Bhuvārāḥa and Trivikrama as a favourite theme representing their prowess in their monuments. We may even say that Mamalla excelled them in the depiction of this spirit here in the sculpture, for, by the side of the Varāḥa panel is, as we shall study presently, Sri Devī who symbolised sovereignty and prosperity (*Rājya Sri*) while by the side of the Trivikrama panel is depicted Durgā or *Vijaya Sri*, the goddess of victory. In short, this cave temple or at any rate, its panels of Trivikrama, Durgā and Sri Devī would appear to have been carved after Mamalla had conquered Vatapi (Badami), and seen similar panels of Varāḥa and Trivikrama there.

Durgā in the adjoining panel stands in *samabhaṅga* on a *padmasana* and with four arms carrying the wheel and discus in the upper pair, the other two hands being in *abhaya* and *katyavalambita* (Fig. 23c). A parasol over her head signifies her universal sovereignty and victorious role (*Vijaya Sri*). On either side are a lion and an antelope. Dwarfish Siva *ganas*, pot-bellied, skip around, on either side of her, (are they going round her?) and two devotees flank her at her feet, the one to her right cutting and offering his head which is held up by the tuft with his left hand while with his right hand he is hacking it off with a long sword shown in the carving as pointing at the neck. On the left is another devotee kneeling and with hands in praise and in adoration. The antelope-association with Durgā, the war-goddess, invites comparison with the Greek concept of Diana also the war-goddess in Greek iconography with antelope-association. The cult of Durgā was popular in Pallava times. This as well as another in the *Draupadī-ratha* have been taken to indicate the practice of human sacrifice to Durgā. Early Tamil literature records self sacrifice before the shrine of Durgā. In the description of the burning ground in *Puḥar* (*Kaveripura pattinam*) recorded by *Saṅgam* literature we get a terrific and haunting picture of the sights and sounds of the *śmaśāna*, in the midst of which we have the following description of Durgā's temple in *Manimekhalai*. "The great temple of Kadamarselvi with the high sacrificial altar in front surrounded by tall trees with drooping branches from which hang the heads of those who had offered their lives with unshaken mind."

Ulaiyavullamodu yirk kadaniruttor
 Talai tungu nedumarantalndu
 Puranjurippitikaigorigiya perumibalinunrir
 Kadamarselvi kaliperunkottam Mani. 6-50-54.

The practice of head offering to Durgā is also mentioned in *Kalingattuparani*. According to the commentator of *Manimekhalai*, the deity referred to as Kadamarselvi is Durgā or Chandika who resides in the *kadu* (*Sudu-kadu*) and that self-sacrifice was done by tying the hair to the branch of a tree and then severing the head. In the Siva temple at Pasupatikoil near Tanjore, we come across a conventional sculpture of the Chola period showing a devotee offering his head to Durgā.

On the northern side of the sanctum is the Gajalakshmi panel (Fig. 23d). Gajalakshmi is called by Tiruvalluvar as the "lady of the lotus" in couplet No. 617. Lakshmi is seated (*pralamba*) on a full-blown lotus, arranging her two legs to rest on a lotus leaf below. The *asana* (*pralamba*) has been described by certain writers as European and some prudish writers have taken exception to Lakshmi and her four female attendants being depicted with apparently no apparel. There is nothing European about the pose she has adopted for sitting, for, how else can the sculptor depict her and her attendants as normal human beings? The sitting pose is just the normal pose that the Devī can adopt adjusting her upper and lower parts of the legs in symmetry to the full blown lotus serving as her seat. Here as in other cases in Mahabalipuram (Adivarāḥa cave) the seeming nudity of the female figures is only to suggest that they are wearing diaphanous apparel. Lakshmi wears a peculiar type of conical crown met with in Pallava and contemporary sculpture of the South, and a *suvarṇavaikakṣhaka* or gold cross-garland adorns her torso. Her hands are held in *kataka* or position to hold lotuses. That she is in a lotus pond is the suggestion by the lotus leaves in front, below her. On either side of her stand four *apsaras*, two on either side all diaphanously clothed, the two nearest carrying water-pitchers, while the other two follow holding on to the



18

leading water carrier by the girdle or the *veni*. Two elephants collect the water pitchers from them and empty the water over Lakshmi's head. The contours of the trunks of the elephants and the natural folds of their ears have received special and delicate touches at the hands of the sculptor. Both Sridevi and her attendants are two-armed as normal human beings and wear big *patra-kundalas* which some writers have characterised as aboriginal. There is nothing aboriginal about them. They are just the right *kundalas* that ancient Indian *silpa* texts prescribe for women.

Other noteworthy features of the Varaha-Trivikrama cave are (1) that the cell inside is oblong with a platform at the hind wall that probably served as the pedestal of the main deity, the deity itself having been of wood or stucco, now absent, (2) that the *dvarapalas* flanking the entrance are identical, the northern pointing to the shrine by the *suchi* pose of his inner hand, while the southern holds his right hand in *vismaya*. Two figures looking like *dvarapalas* on the two lateral walls of the shrine are not similar though standing in *tribhanga*. While one has placed his hands in *kati* the other has right hand raised in *abhaya*; (3) inside the excavation, below the ceiling is a cornice containing human heads with a frieze of swans below, and (4) two ornate lion pillars and two lion pilasters.

18. *Dvarapalikas* guarding Durga shrine, Kotikal-Mandapam. Mahendra style, Period II.

19. Saluvankuppam, Mahishamardini panel, in front of Atiranachandas cave temple Rajasimha's time (A.D. 700-728).



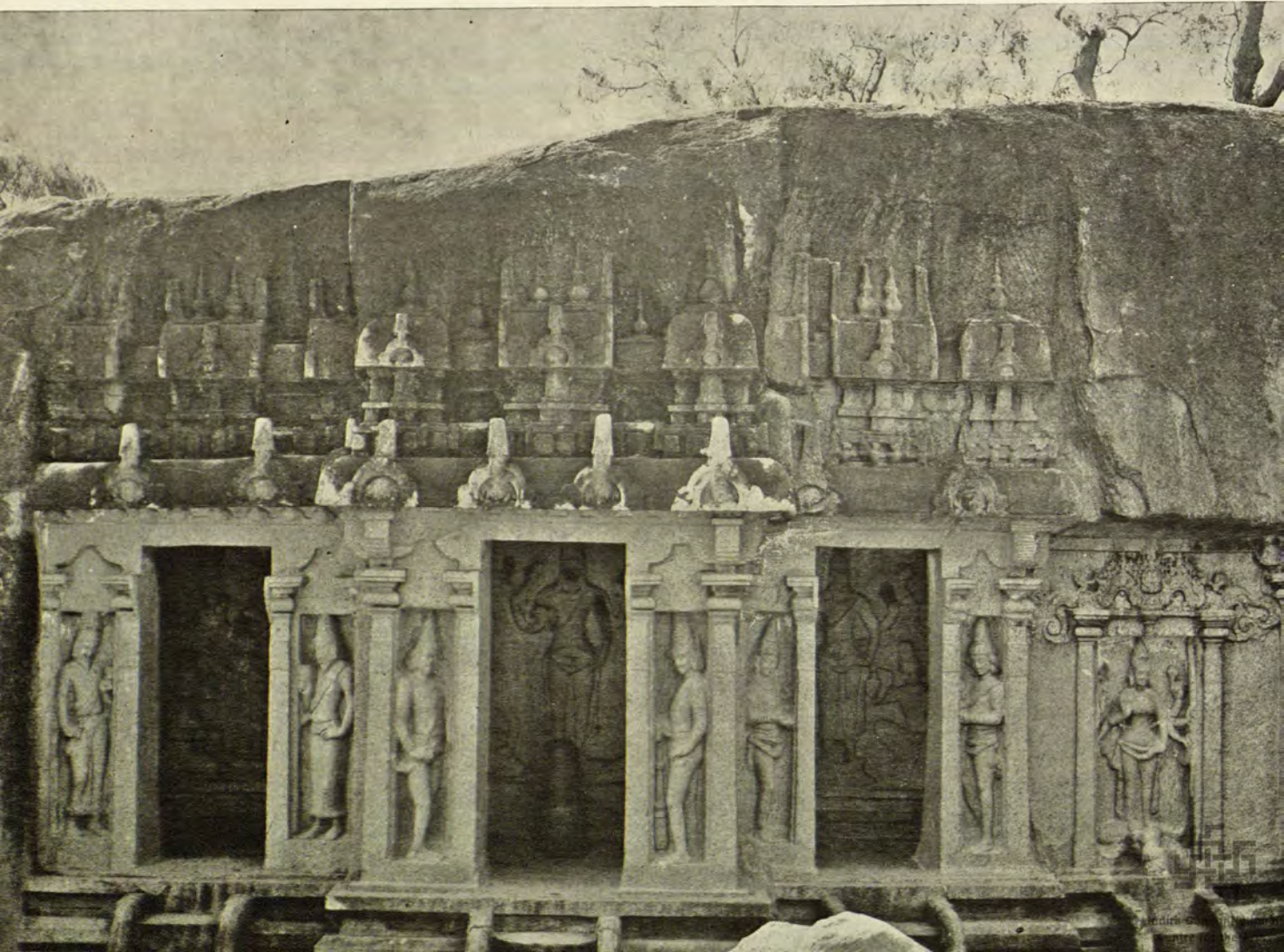
19

TRIMURTI CAVE TEMPLE (Fig. 20)



19a

On the Western face of the ridge on the main hill at Mahabalipuram has been cut a triple-celled temple for the three gods of the Hindu pantheon (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva). The idea of a *Trikuta* or *Vimanatraya* is also noticed at Muvarkovil and Kodumbalur near Pudukottai where three identical shrines stand in a row though separated from each other. The front of each of these cells is beautifully carved with the usual decoration of a *gopuram*. Pilasters support the superstructure. Each cell is flanked by *dvarapalas* shown in three-quarters profile. On the face of the rock immediately south of the row is a niche surmounted by *makara-torana* for eight-armed Durga standing on the cut-head of the demon Mahisha. In the cells are represented Brahma, Siva and Vishnu each attended by kneeling devotees and flying dwarfish *ganas*, one of each on either side. Brahma who is usually represented with four heads has here a single face and wears a cross-garland of *rudraksha* beads. He carries a rosary and water vessel in his upper pair of arms, the other two being in *abhaya* and *katyavalambita*. Siva carries an axe and rosary and Vishnu a conch and discus. On the top of the *prati* (the top surface of the *adhishtana*) in front of Brahma shrine are inscribed three Pallava-*Grantha* letters reading 'Malla' which is a general tribal name and a suffix of the Pallavas. The central figure has been identified as Subrahmanya in the absence of Brahma's four heads (Fig. 20a). As it does not strictly answer the iconography of Subrahmanya, we have to look for a special aspect of Subrahmanya called *Brahma Sasta* in which he put down the pride of Brahma by exposing his ignorance of the Vedas and in which he should be represented with single face and carry *akshamala* and *kamandalu* as here. Parallels for the occurrence of Subrahmanya exist in Pallava sculpture; one such is represented in the ground floor of *Dharmaraja ratha*. A similar figure occurs in the lower cave at Tiruchirappalli where in the same row Brahma, Ganesa, Durga and Surya are represented in addition, which confirm our identification as Subrahmanya. Two bearded sage-like *dvarapalas* (Fig 20b) and the *rudraksha chaplet* of Brahma lend further support to the identification. In the projecting rock above the cell have been cut leaf-shaped *gavaksha* windows. Over this, three sets of three miniature *vimanas* have been carved in low relief.





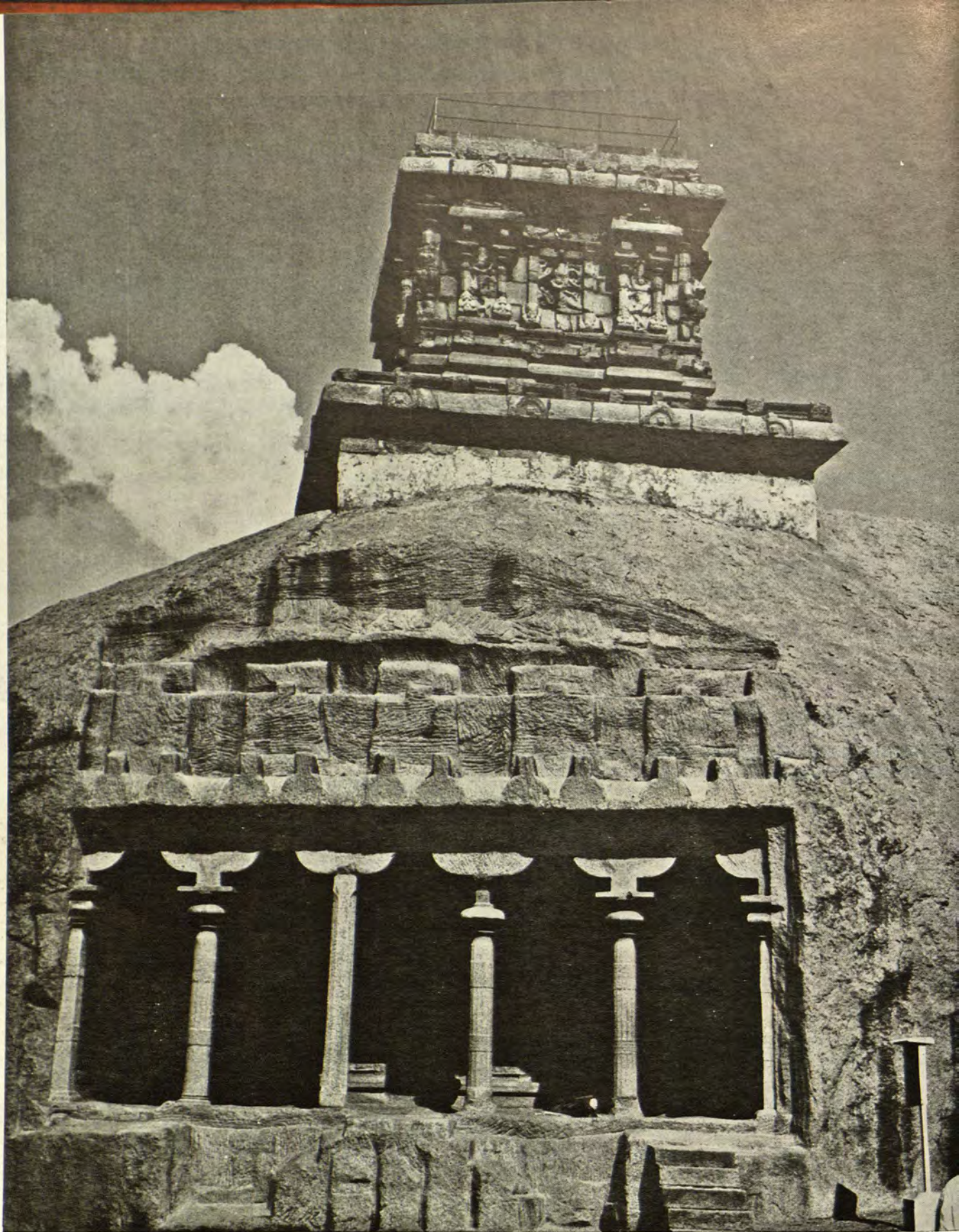
20a



MAHISHAMARDINI MANDAPAM (Fig. 21)

About a furlong from the five *rathas*, on the top of the hill near the Lighthouse is an excavation called Yamapuri. On the top of the same boulder is Olakkannesvara, a ruined Pallava structural temple which was utilised for a lighthouse before the present one was constructed. The cave is a long hall with triple cells. The facade shows four pillars and two pilasters. The pillars are polygonal with bulbous cushion capital. Pillars supported by squatting lions raise from the angles of a stylobate in a small *mandapa* projecting from the central cell flanked by *dvarapalas*. The floor of the *antarala* has been cut into a deep pit at a later stage with a socket behind. The idea of the later Vaishnavites who occupied this cave was to use the porch as a Vishnu shrine after blocking the door-way of the shrine-cell behind, because it contains a bas-relief of Siva which was not wanted. They have left their marks of conch and discus on the two side pilasters of the *mandapa* facade. The two pillars in the front row have squatting lions on circular plinths. From the heads of the lions spring the apices of the shafts, circular in section. The facade pillars are without the lion-bases. The *dvarapalas* are double armed and stand in semi-profile. The one on the south rests his elbow on a club while his right hand is on *kati* and his *vajropavita* is in *nivita* fashion. He has two horns on his head for which reason he may be identified as Nandi. The set of *dvarapalas* with clubs resembles in general the pair in *Koneri-mandapam*. The shrine chamber is oblong and on the back wall is a large bas-relief of Somaskanda with Parvati and Skanda and his vehicle bull Nandi (Fig. 22). Behind the bull is a devotee who may be Chandeesvara if what Siva holds in his upper right hand can be taken to be a *parivattam* or garland. This is the only Somaskanda group here seated on a *Simhasana* showing Nandi and a devotee below. If the identification as Chandisa is admitted, this, along with a similar relief on *Dharmaraja ratha*, would form the earliest representation of Siva as Chandisanugrahamurti. Behind Siva stands Brahma on the south, four-armed and four-headed with *kalasa* and rosary in the upper hands. Vishnu, also behind on the north, is also four-armed with *prayogachakra* and *sankha* in his hands. Between Brahma and Siva is Surya not found in other Somaskanda panels. On the floor is a circular socket with groove as if to accommodate a detached *linga* and its *yoni*, clearly later installations.

Sculpture took precedence over architecture in this cave temple. Occupying the whole of the northern end wall of the *mandapa* is a large panel showing Durga as Mahishamardini subduing Mahishasura (Fig. 21a). Here the sculptor has combined beauty with virility and variety. She (Durga) is eight-armed riding her lion and equipped with all weapons and using the bow with its string pulled up to her ear, the bowstring and arrow however not being depicted (Fig. 21b). Her right hands hold



21

21. *Below: Mahishamardini cave temple. Mamalla style.
Above: Olakkanesvara temple (structural) Rajasimha style.*
- 21a *Mahishamardini cave temple. Fight between Durga on lion and Mahishasura with buffalo-head. Mamalla style.*
- 21b *Mahishamardini cave temple.*

Eight armed Durga in battle array followed by Gana. Mamalla style.

- 21c *Mahishamardini cave temple. Jaya, one of Durga's Yoginis, striking with sword. Mamalla style.*
- 21d *Mahishamardini cave temple. Close striking view of Durga shooting arrows.*





21a



21c



21b



21d
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21f



21e

21e *Mahishamardini cave temple. Mahishasura wielding a heavy club. Mamalla style.*

21f *Mahishamardini cave temple. Durga's Gana waving chamara for Durga. Mamalla style.*

21g *With Madhu and Kaitabha at his feet. Yoga-Sayana Vishnu in Yoga-nidra. Mahishamardini cave temple. Mamalla style.*

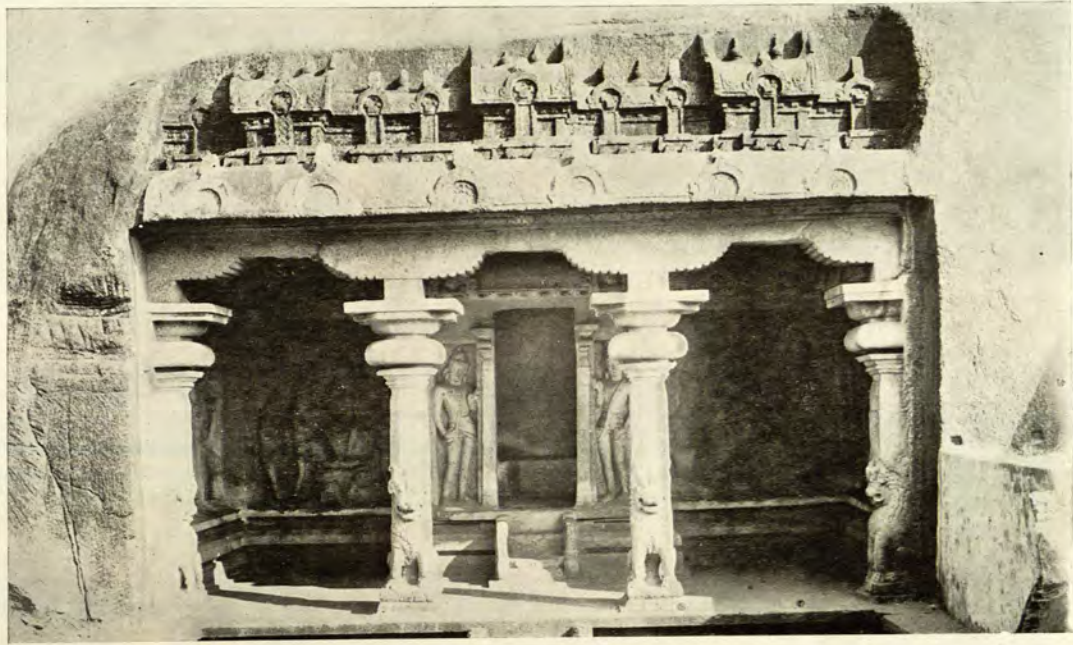


21g

sword, bell and discus and her left dagger, *pasha* and *sankha*, while the front pair of hands are as described already engaged in shooting the arrow, from a bow. Below Durga is one of her *yoginis*, Jaya by name (Fig. 21c), graceful as Durga is, also striking with a sword. Durga is attended by hosts of *ganas* and *yogini* and is in the typical warlike *alidha* posture (Fig. 21d). Two parasols held over Durga and Mahishasura symmetrically suggest their high status (Fig. 21a). The battle scene is full of animation. Mahishasura is in an equally dynamic pose with his contours powerfully delineated. The merging of the buffalo head with the human trunk is marvellous (Fig. 21e). Wielding a club he has a sword struck to his belt behind. The enthusiasm of the *ganas* (Fig. 21f) on Durga's side is delightfully contrasted with the dissipated attitude of the *asuras* on Mahishasura's side (Fig. 21a). One of his retinue holds a parasol over Mahishasura, a second is falling down headlong over the upraised sword of Jaya, a third is lying dead before Mahishasura, a fourth is collapsing, fifth is retreating, a sixth is kneeling, supplicating, while a seventh is fighting with a *gana* to the proper left of Durga. The entire grouping of figures is forceful and graphic for which the panel has drawn unstinted admiration. This is probably one of the most remarkable representations of Mahishamardini in a group of which we have another at Ellora. This along with Seshasayi panel opposite, Varaha and Gajalakshmi in the Varaha cave and Arjuna's penance have gone down in history as the best



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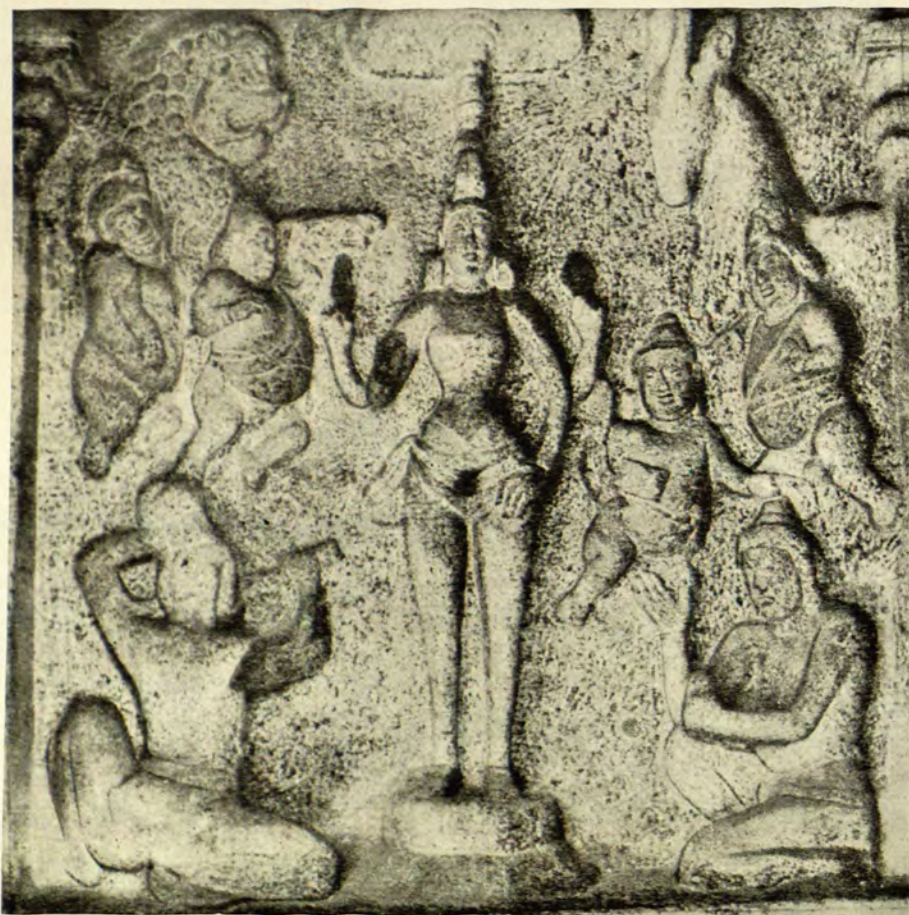


22. Somaskanda relief on the back wall of shrine coll. Mahishamardini cave temple. Note Chandesa behind Nandi.
23. Cave temple, Varaha Mandapa. Mamalla style. (A. D. 640)

representations of plastic art at Mahabalipuram. The sculpture follows the description of the event given in *Devimahatmya* of *Markandeya Purana*. The *Markandeya Purana* (Canto 82) says that in a great battle the *devas* were beaten by the demons whose king Mahisha became supreme. A light representing energy came out from each god and all such lights became one large body which assumed the shape of a goddess. All the gods gave her their respective weapons with which she fought with Mahisha and his demons and after a great battle slew Mahisha. The *Markandeya Purana* says that Durga got *sula* from Siva, *chakra* from Vishnu, conch from Varuna, spear from Agni, bell from Indra, bow and arrow from the Maruts and a number of other weapons from others. In the panel the sculptor has presented a judicious selection of the weapons in her eight arms. A ribbed crescent-shaped object behind her left ear is the quiver for the arrows (Fig. 21a). On the opposite side, occupying the whole of the southern end wall of the *mandapa* is a deep relief of Vishnu as Seshasayi who is really *yogasayanamurti* reclining on his serpent-couch and in *yoganidra* (Fig. 21g). He is two-armed and at his feet are the two *asuras*, Madhu and Kaitabha conspiring with each other and brandishing their weapons with the common intention to strike at Vishnu. Below the feet of Vishnu, Bhu-Devi kneeling with her hands in *anjali* and in front of her, supposed by earlier writers, two out of four *ayudha-purushas*, *chakra* and sword, depicted as two handsome youths while the other two, *panchajanya* as a dwarfish *gana* and *kaumodaki* as a charming Amazon are flying above Vishnu. In all probability the two so-called *ayudha-purushas* standing all attention below the snake bed of the God may be Jaya and Vijaya who are mounting guard. Here Sesha is docile while at Tirumayyam he defies the *asuras* with rage, and poison issues out of his tongues as flames. The figure of Vishnu is a picture of peace and calm in contrast to virility and motion of Durga in the opposite panel. The choice of this particular form of Vishnu in association with Mahishamardini is deliberate and significant. Both are after the *Devi-Mahatmya* tradition (*Markandeya Purana*) which records the *yoga-nidra* of



23a



23c



23d

- 23a *Bhu-Varaha panel, Varaha-Mandapa. Mamalla style.*
 23b *Trivikrama panel, Varaha-Mandapa. Mamalla style.*
 23c *Durga panel, Varaha-Mandapa. Mamalla style.*
 23d *Gaja-Lakshmi panel, Varaha-Mandapa. Mamalla style.*

Vishnu and the story of the slaying of Mahisha by Devi. The female flying away from Vishnu on top, supposed by earlier writers to be *Kaumodaki*, would appear to be the personification of contemplative Sleep or *Yoga-nidra* in which form *Sakti* entered into Vishnu and made him 'lapse' into half slumber and half contemplation at the end of the *Yuga*. Threatened by Madhu and Kaitabha and being prayed to by Brahma, *Sakti* withdraws herself and Vishnu is roused up to kill *asuras*. She is described as having issued forth in her full form from Vishnu's eyes, mouth, nose, arms, heart and chest thereby enabling him to wake up and perceive Madhu and Kaitabha. It is precisely in this manner as *Markandeya Purana* records that the sculptor has fashioned out *Seshasayana* in this cave. He has focussed attention on the sleeping face of Vishnu and has done justice to "the calm of a sleeping face", which is not disturbed by the limbs of Vishnu. The sculptor has shown Vishnu just with two hands and none of his symbols are present (attached to his limbs).

If the flying Amazon-like Devi may be identified as *Yoga-nidra*, the dwarfish figure behind her may be taken to personify lassitude and vertigo that go with sleep. As a parallel we may refer to the conception of dwarfish *Apasmara* or *Muyalaga* under the feet of *Nataraja*.

The three cells in this cave were perhaps to enshrine three out of the five forms of Siva. Architecturally this cave temple heralds the appearance of the lion-based pillars with capitals as found in its inner *mandapa* which in turn go to form the facade of the *Varaha-mandapa* and becomes the characteristic feature of the Mamalla style of cave temples and *rathas*.

OLAKKANNESSVARA TEMPLE (Fig. 26)

Above the rock containing the *Mahisha-mandapa* is a ruined masonry temple of Siva of *samachaturasra-tritala-vimana* type, to be assigned to the time of Rajasimha (A. D. 700-28). Though the superstructure is missing it should have resembled the *Shore Temple*. We encounter here rampant lions and panels representing Siva such as Vinadhara Dakshina-murti holding *vina* (broken) in upper hands and lower hands in a pose of appreciation as of music and with left leg in *virasana*, meditating under a tree. Alidhanrittamurti in the dance-*karana Talasam-sphotita* as in Kanchi Kailasanatha Temple and left leg in *vrischika*, dancing as a warrior in action, and as Ravananugrahamurti seated in *sukhasana*, with Uma by his side, showing mercy to Ravana when he repented and regretted his folly in attempting to shake Kailasa, Siva's abode and Siva, four-handed, upper hands showing *vismaya* and lower playing on *vina*. Other noteworthy sculptures are of *dvarapalas*, with crossed-legs and dwarfish Ganas blowing the conch.

Though this temple is popular among the common folk as Olakkanatha temple, its correct and original name was Olakkannessvara which in turn was a corruption of the form Ulaikkannissvaram, meaning the temple of Siva whose forehead bore the third eye of destruction. Its superstructure was removed and with its truncated base shaped like a *mandapa* as we find it today, it was put to use as a lighthouse until A.D. 1900 when the modern lighthouse near it was constructed by the British.

ADI VARAHA CAVE TEMPLE

This cave temple, in worship, is a little apart behind the Mahishamardini *mandapa* and its facade is almost completely hidden by an ugly modern building which is usually kept locked save for a spell of the routine service when the priest-in-charge has to be searched for and prevailed upon to open it to visitors. The cave consists of a large hall with a front row of four pillars and two pilasters supported by squatting lions and a back row of two pillars without lions and a cell cut in the centre of the back wall. An early Chola inscription of Rajendra I (A.D. 1012-1044) found on the facade calls this temple—"Paramesvara Mahavaraha—Vishnu-griham" thereby indicating that it was consecrated in the time of Paramesvaravarman (A.D. 672-700), named after him, though generally this temple is often grouped with those excavated by Mamalla. This temple shows some advanced features and elaboration than what we find in the *Varaha-mandapam* though it contains identical panels of the *Varaha-mandapam*. The Trivikrama and *Varaha* panels are not reproduced but the main shrine has a painted stucco bas-relief of *Varaha* of almost similar iconographic type as that in the *Varaha-mandapam*. The principal deity installed here is *Adivaraha* or *Bhuvavaraha* whereas in the *Varaha-mandapam* there is no means of determining the nature of the principal deity installed. The pillars in the facade of the *mahamandapa* are *vyala*-pillars, the *vyalas* squatting on their haunches with long and erect tails behind looped forward to reach over the manes again looping down to form double curves. *Dvarapala* arrests our attention when the improvised door is opened by the priest. (Fig. 27-i). The shrine cell shows *Varaha* raising *Bhu-devi* from the ocean. The relief has a coat of garish modern paint and is not subject to ceremonial washing or anointing which would be the case if it were of stone. The temple appears to have been taken over by the Vaishnavas of the mediaeval times. Dr. Meenakshi detected traces of colour on the ceiling and pillars and wrote that the painting was done in the Pallava period. On either side of the shrine entrance are *dvarapalas* both of them identical with one of their hands raised in adoration and the other hands placed in *kati*. In the central panel of the

northern side is Vishnu, four armed, standing over a *padmasana* (Fig. 27-a). Below him are two kneeling devotees. The corresponding central panel on the south shows standing Hari-hara (Fig. 27-b) four armed, holding in the upper right axe, in the upper left *prayoga-chakra*, while the lower right shows *abhaya* and the lower left rests on *kati* with two kneeling devotees below. A parasol is above Hari-hara. The extreme northern panel on the shrine front shows a graceful form of Adishesha, two armed, one arm holding a flower towards the shrine (Fig. 27-a). On the south is a similar figure in *tribhanga* but without the serpent hood (Fig. 27-b). The two sections of the back wall on either side of the shrine-front show in larger square panels Sri Devi (Fig. 27-c) on the north and Durga on the south (Fig. 27-d). Sri Devi (Fig. 27-c) corresponds to the same in the *Varaha-mandapam* and Durga to Durga in the *Varaha-mandapam*. Sri Devi in *pralambasana* seated on lotus is being bathed by elephants (Fig. 27-c). She is two-armed holding lotus buds. Two pairs of attendants can be noticed but the two outer attendants stand a little away and hold something, a point in which they differ from those of the *Varaha-mandapa*. The northern one picks out flowers for *archana* from a flower basket. The southern one holds a lotus bud. The total effect of the sculpture is one of symmetry and spectacular gratification. The anointing elephants, whose lateral view of their front portions brings out the beauty of elephant-anatomy, are engaged in the *abhisheka* ceremony of Sri Devi.

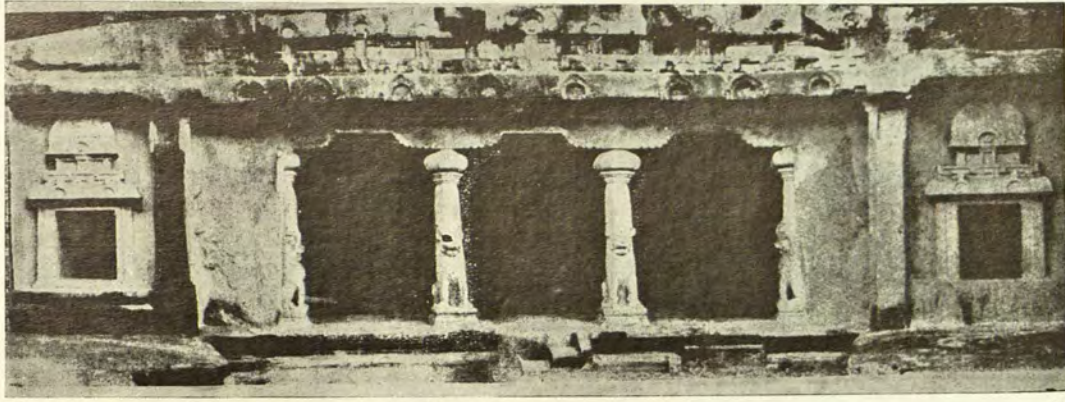
On the southern side is Durga (Fig. 27-d) eight-armed, standing in *tribhanga* and not in the usual *samabhanga* as we notice her in the *Varaha-mandapam* and in the Trimurti cave temple, while her right leg is bent below the knee and crossed (*svastika*), her straight left trampling over the head of Mahishasura. *Prayogachakra*, sword, bell, conch, shield and bow are the contents of six out of her eight hands, while the right front hand holds a cup and lower left hand is in *kati* with a parrot (*lilasuka*) nestling on her wrist and looking towards the cup. The *tribhanga* pose, eight arms, and buffalo head below shows this Durga sculpture as different from that of the *Varaha-mandapam*. She has a breast-band and *svarnavaikakshaka*, *patra-kundalas*, *valayas* and *manjiras*. Behind, on her right can be noticed the top of a trident over the capital of a pillar, the whole suggesting a *sula dhvaja* as in the Siyamangalam cave temple of Mahendra I. On either side of her head are two flying *ganas*. At the extreme corners can be noticed the face of a lion on one side and the head of an antelope on the other as in the *Varaha-mandapam*. Below the *ganas*, two maidens stand, the one on the left holding a bow and the one on the right holding a scimitar. Are they *dvarapalikas* as they are adorned like Durga? At the bottom, kneeling on either side are two devotees, the one on the north with the mass of hair tied up into a top-knot. He holds in his arm-pit a sword held in its sheath. With a small dagger held in his right hand he is piercing his left palm placed on the knee which is a symbolical* sacrifice similar to Singavaram, (cave temples of Pallavas, Pl. XXXII-A). The devotee on the southern side holds a lotus in his left and with his right hand suggests adoration. His head-dress is a *jatabhara* with a top-knot characteristic of Pallava sculptures. The pose of Durga standing on the head of Mahisha, the devotee symbolically letting out blood not by total beheading as in *Draupadi ratha* and *Varaha-mandapam*, other details and fine workmanship remind us of the similar Durga-group in the Singavaram cave temple (Fig. 27-e) of the Mahendra type, with which this panel compares well.

The panel at the extreme north end shows Siva as Gangadhara (Fig. 27-f) with four arms in *tribhanga*, receiving Ganga on his locks, the strands of which he is supporting with his right upper arm. Ganga is shown as a woman with hands in *anjali* coming down from the skies. Siva's lower right is in *kataka*, lower left in *kati* and upper left holds rosary. Round his waist is wound a cobra rearing up its hood to his right. In the corresponding panel on the south end is shown Brahma (Fig. 27-g) in *samabhanga* whose front and two lateral faces alone are shown, the idea being that the fourth is hidden behind. Of his four arms the upper right holds *akshamala* while the lower left is in *abhaya*—rather unusual as *abhaya* always go with the right hand—but obviously adopted here to be symmetrical with the hand poses of Gangadhara on the opposite side.

The end walls of the *ardhamandapa* have also panels of portrait sculptures. On the northern end a king is represented seated with ease on a *simhasana* (Fig. 27-h). He wears a *kirta* and his right arm is in *chinmudra* and the left is placed on his thigh. His earlobes are distended by the weight of the *kundalas*. His two queens in diaphanous clothing stand one on either side of him. The one on the king's right wears a *hara* indicating her superior rank and the other does not have it. There is an inscription, in archaic Pallava *Grantha* and ancient form of Tamil on the lintel reading as "Sri-Simhavinna-Potradi-rajana". The corresponding niche on the southern wall shows another royal group with a label also in archaic script and ancient Tamil reading as "Sri Mahendra-potradi-rajana" (Fig. 27-i). Here the king stands pointing towards the central shrine or the Durga panel and leading by his left hand his queen behind whom is another lady. The queen is dressed up in a garment going round both her legs. The other lady who follows has diaphanous clothing, dressed in *kaccha* between the legs looking almost nude. The nearer one is obviously the queen and the other lady is probably a beloved and recognised spouse. The two labels over the portrait led the

*The Kalika Purana details the ritual narrated in the there stone inscription of Pallava Kampavarman. Perhaps, this manual offering of blood-letting from the palm is the first step of the sacrificial ceremony of offering flesh from the parts of the body (*navakhandas*) before the final head offering.

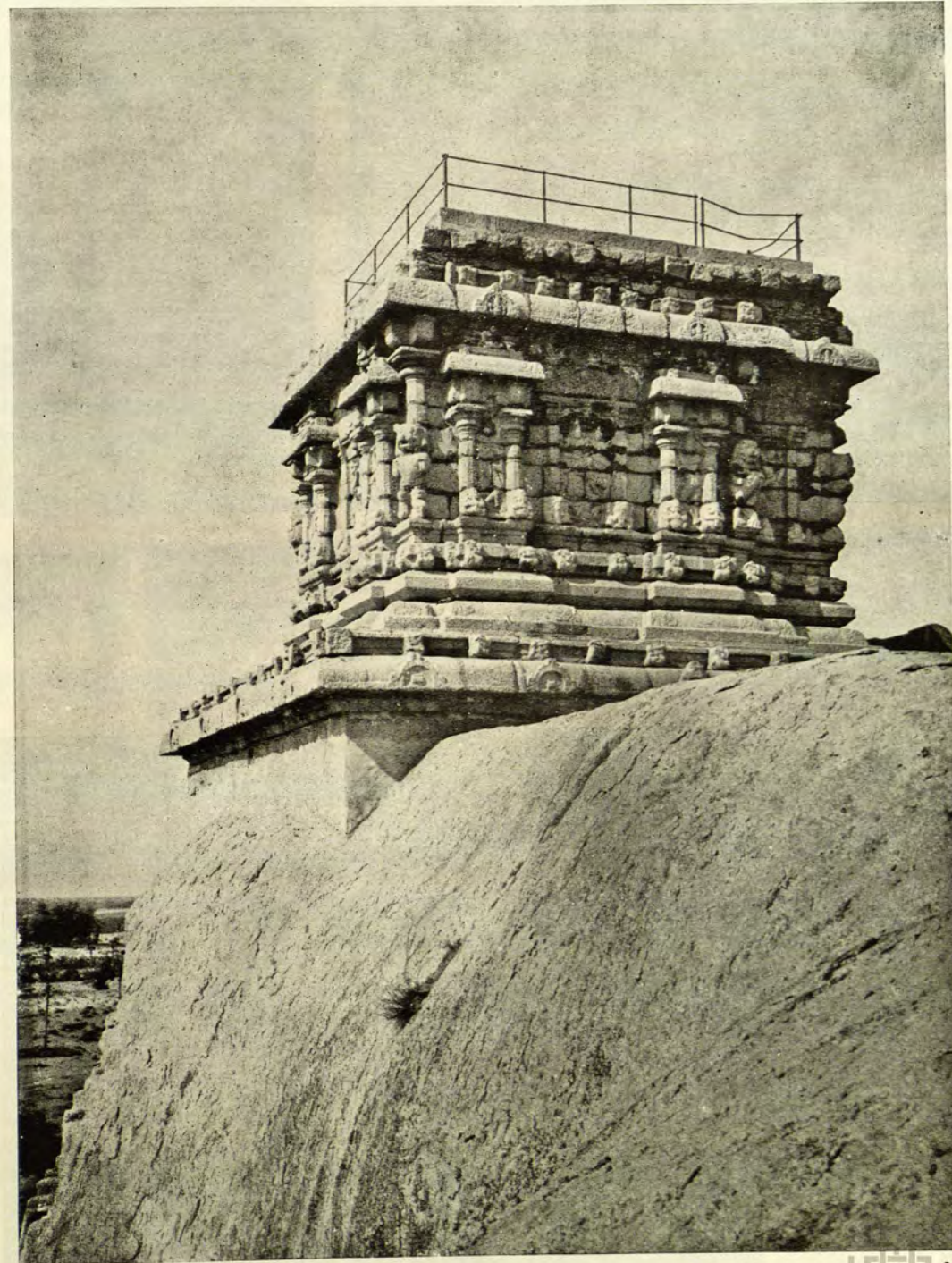




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26

24. *Ramanuja-mandapam* cave temple, with two miniature vimanas in relief at either extreme. Mamalla style.
25. *Koneri Mandapa*. Transition from Mahendra to Mamalla style. Note ornate pillars without lion-bases.
26. *Olakkannesvara* structural temple. Rajasimha style. (700-28 A.D.)





27a



27c



27e



27d

27a *Vishnu, Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*

27e *Durga, Singavaram cave temple of Ranganatha. Mahendra style.*

27b *Harihara, Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*

27f *Siva as Gangadhara. Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*

27c *Sri, or Gaja Lakshmi. Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*

27g *Brahma. Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*

27d *Durga panel. Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*

27h *Simhavinna-potradirajan. (Simha Vishnu Pallava). Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.*



27f



27g



27h



27j



27



late Sri Krishna Sastri to identify Simhavishnu with the conqueror of Vatapi, Narasimha Vishnu on paleographical grounds and Mahendra with Mahendravarman I. Subsequent writers identified Simha Vishnu with the father of Mahendravarman I. But according to K. R. Srinivasan the name 'Paramesvaramaha-Varaha-Vishnu-griham' shows its connection with Paramesvaravarman I, and that the portrait of Mahendravarman found here would indicate, if it is his own work, that he too was associated with the excavation of the temple and would perhaps therefore represent Mahendravarman II. If so, Srinivasan maintains that Paramesvaravarman I after whom the cave is named must have completed the work after his predecessors. It would then mean that the association of two of his immediate predecessors with the cave temple appears to be the intention of Paramesvara I in putting up the portrait while he himself lent his own name to this temple. Stylistic and architectural features of the temple show that the work apparently started late in the reign of Mamalla, progressed during the short reign of Mahendravarman II and was completed and consecrated in the reign of Paramesvaravarman I. That the intended dedication of this cave temple was for Vishnu becomes clear from the presence of a long but rare inscription over the niche to the south of the shrine entrance enumerating the ten *avatars* of Vishnu* and also from the name "Paramesvara maha-Varaha-Vishnu-griham" mentioned in the Chola inscription. The avatar-inscription which is the earliest epigraphical enumeration of the avatars is interesting in that it includes Buddha in the list by excluding Krishna. Besides the two label inscriptions and the *avatar*-inscription there is a longer inscription in three lines in Pallava-Grantha florid script running along the floor towards the Mahendra panel. It reads as "Dhik tesham..... Rudrah" (see p. 63), exactly as in *Ganesha ratha* and *Dharmaraja mandapa* and *Ramanuja mandapa*. Writers have objected to the reference to Rudra in the inscription since this cave temple was consecrated to Vishnu. This objection cannot stand as the verse is only a dance-*pada* meant to be sung in *sandhya* to the timings of *Kottumaddalam* (drum) as a part and parcel of temple ritual music. Again in front of the shrine on the floor are two lines of a Telugu inscription and further down a single inscription in Tamil. Paramesvara's leaning to Saivism becomes clear by his dedication of *Dharmaraja mandapa*, *Ramanuja mandapa* and *Ganesha ratha* and *Dharmaraja ratha* to Siva. The structural temple at Kuran from where were recovered a beautiful bronze image of dancing Nataraja (Sivaramamurti, *South Indian Bronzes*, Fig. 7-c) and a copper plate grant of Paramesvaravarman I, was also dedicated to Siva. As if to indicate his role as one who completed Adivaraha temple and *Dharmaraja ratha* he has carved the portraits of his predecessors with their names in the former case and the titles of Mamalla and perhaps also a few of Mahendra II in the first and second storey of the *Dharmaraja ratha*, reserving the top storey which he himself completed, where he consecrated Siva as Somaskanda for inscriptions referring to himself. The *Dharmaraja ratha* is one which explains our point of view, viz., that the variety of monuments concerned, the hardness of the material, the time involved, considered along with the shortness of the reigns of the concerned Pallavas would conclusively show that such works were not confined to one reign but were spread over more than one reign. The Mamalla style of the cave, ancient Tamil forms such as *Vinna* and *potradirajan* and the archaic nature of the script of the portrait inscriptions, however, point strongly to the identity of the portraits as of Simhavishnu and his son Mahendravarman I.

27-i Portrait sculpture of Mahendra-potradirajan. (Mahendra Pallava I). Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.

27-j Dvarapala. Adivaraha cave temple. Mamalla style.

28. Pancha-Pandava Mandapa cave temple. Mamalla style.

RAMANUJA MANDAPA CAVE TEMPLE (Fig. 24)

In its original condition it was the most finished cave temple. The temple consists of a large rectangular *ardhamandapa* with a row of pillars on its facade and with three shrines behind. On either side of the facade on the side walls are two model *vimanas* complete from base to stupa with a square rock platform projecting beyond the base line of the mandapa (Fig. 24). At either extreme ends the vertical face of the rock shows space for two large *dvarapala* reliefs which were chiselled off by later Vaishnava occupants who converted the cave into a Ramanuja-kudam obliterating the original sculptures and the three inner shrines. The two pillars and the two pilasters are *vyala*-based. We call them *vyalas* because they have three divaricating horn-like projections over the heads, while the *vyalas* are sejant on their haunches. The corbels of the pillars and pilasters have the usual curved profile with *taranga* ornamentation and median belt decorated with *kodikkarukku* (*patralata*). Over the corbel is the *Uttira* (beam) and over the beam is another beam off-set into *valabhi* and *vajana* on the inside and with an ogee face (*valabhi*) outside, on which is carved a *bhuta-vari* which occurs for the first time here, while the *hamsamala* is more common in Pallava cave temples. The *bhutas* are twenty-seven in number from end to end in two symmetrical rows of twelve each leaving out the two end ones and the central large *kumbhodara*. The twelve *bhutas* of each row carry on their shoulders rope-like imbricated garlands. The seventh *gana* from the south who has an elephant-head can be Ganapati (c.f. Amaravati rail friezes). When we remember that Ganapati means the leader of *ganas* we have perhaps here the earliest representation of Ganapati in Pallava times, which means that he has only the role of a *gana* and not of a god to be given a place in a shrine. The tenth *gana* from the northern end is Nandi as he has a bull face. The other *ganas* have human faces. Over this *bhuta-vari* is a series of curved brackets imitating wooden ribbing which supports the *kapota* above,

*Matsyah Kurmo Varahascha Narsimhascha Vamanah |
Ramo Ramascha Ramascha Buddhah Kalkischa hi dasa ||

a feature met with for the first time in Pallava cave temples, though common in Chalukyan cave temples. The edge of the *kapota* is marked into a brim. The *kudu*-arches show lotus medallions instead of the usual human faces, the shovel-like finial being not cut out, was perhaps inserted judging from the socket holes on their tops and the finials missing. Over the *kapota* is a frieze of *vyalas* over which is a row of five *salas*.

Behind the facade of the pillars is a large oblong *mandapa* on whose hind-wall were originally cut three shrines *garbhagrihas* almost square, the central one projecting. On either side of the entrance to the shrine and cut into niches were *dvarapalas*, of one of which the outline can be made out at the southern end. Cut into the back wall of the central shrine is a shallow niche which originally contained a bas-relief of Somaskanda which was later on chipped off by vandals, but still shows the faint outlines of two attendant deities on top and the parasol over Siva and Uma. Traces of old plaster perhaps painted can be seen on the ceiling of the shrines including the two lateral shrines and their inner walls. The two lateral shrines have no niches on the back wall. This cave temple was perhaps dedicated to Trimurti with the central shrine for Siva or that the three shrines contained three forms of Siva. The panels at either end wall of the *mandapa* contain sculptures which have been chiselled off. While it is difficult to determine the subject of the sculpture on the northern panel, for all that we see is but a *simhasana*, the southern panel appears to have had a standing Durga with attendants carved on it.

There are two inscriptions in florid Pallava-*Grantha* script on the floor as we enter the *mandapa*, and another on the floor between the southern pillar and pilaster in four letters which appears to be a short label. The larger inscription on which we walk as we enter the cave contains the imprecatory verse "Dhik tehsam... Rudrah", found also in the *Ganesa-Ratha*, *Dharmaraja-mandapa*, and *Adivaraha* cave temple (see p. 63) which can be translated as "Six times cursed be they, in whose hearts lives not Rudra, the deliverer from the evil path". Some writers opine that this is enough evidence to declare the temple as dedicated to Siva. As we have remarked elsewhere (see p. 63) this is only a dance-*pada* in the temple ritual common to any Hindu temple. The later Vaishnava occupants of the temple, who cut off the three central shrines and also the bas-relief, have added a frontal *mandapa* supported on six crude pillars. An additional flight of steps on the southern side gave access to the top of this *mandapa*, the terrace and the side walls of which having fallen, only the crude pillars remain, giving a sorrowful tale of vandalism.

UNFINISHED CAVE TEMPLES

Three unfinished *mandapams* in Mamalla style, interesting indeed even in their unfinished excavations, belong to this period. They are: (1) *Pulippudar-mandapa*, a cave temple, with an oblong *mandapa*, with four *vyala*-based pillars but no *hara* (which is an invariable feature of the Mamalla style) over the *prastara* and with five cell-openings, the front of the shrines inside having no *adhishtana* or pilasters. This marks a decadent stage in Mamalla style. (2) Unfinished cave temple near Koneri-mandapam, which is five celled and reproduces the same plan as the *Pulippudur-mandapa*, along with which it would mark a decadent stage of Mamalla style and also show that it is a late attempt in the period of Mamalla. (3) *Pancha-Pandava-mandapam* (Fig. 28): This cave temple excavated into the rock to the south of Arjuna's penance is the largest excavation here and is advanced over the other two unfinished cave temples being a good example nearer to a perfect Mamalla type than the other two in that not only the pillars are *vyala*-based but also there exists on top of the facade a row of *kutas* and *salas* (Fig. 28). The brackets above the capitals of the pillars are decorated with lions and griffins with human riders. In view of its speciality, one is tempted to make a guess of its design if completed. It would have been a central rock-out shrine surrounded by a pillared *mandapa* permitting perambulation. While *vyala*-caryatids are found over the pillars they are absent on the pilasters. This is the most peculiar feature not noticed in any other Mahendra or Mamalla cave temple, though they are often found singly over the corner pilasters of shrine fronts, for example, in the porch of the shrine in the Mahishamardini cave and in the structural *vimanas* of the Pallavas and the early Cholas. They are also found in the Badami caves which seem to have inspired them in the Pallava country. Behind the facade row is a second row of pillars without the *vyala* base. Behind these is an oblong shrine with entrance in the middle and two niches one on either side. The two lateral sides of the shrine have been cut into, till the back wall of the *mandapa* is reached but the rock has not been cut behind the shrine intended to take the circumambulatory. In other words this work had not commenced. This would have been a unique example of a Mamalla cave temple and would form the third in the whole series of the Pallava cave temples where the central shrine with an ambulatory (double) pillared *mandapa* was designed, the pillared *mandapa* indicating by its *hara* four cardinal projections simulating the *chaturmukha* type. Like the Trimurti cave temple, here also the *kuta* is introduced in the *hara*. Noteworthy features are the *vyala* caryatids on the capitals as in the Chalukya examples and its plan with a central monolithic shrine surrounded by a double pillared cloister for which reason it has to be placed very late among the Mamalla style cave temples in the period of Paramesvara I, if not of Rajasimha.



KRISHNA-MANDAPA (Figs. 29, 30)

Krishna-mandapa is a real *mandapa*, constructed probably in the post-Vijayanagara period, in front of a large sculpture relief. We may even call it a cave cut on the side of a boulder showing a scene from Krishna's life, namely, Krishna lifting up Mount Govardhana to protect cowherds and cowherdesses, *gopas* and *gopis* from the storm and rain raised by Indra. Though vandalism has been in evidence here it has not caused much damage except for Vaishnavite marks incised on the forehead of the couchant bull and the erection of a post-Vijayanagara pillared-hall which destroys the view of the original facade. Though opinions differ regarding the merit of the sculptural work of the relief, one view considering it as of indifferent merit and the other view extolling it, it is indeed a charming pastoral scene of cows, cowherds and cowherdesses and *gokula*. Krishna is shown supporting the hill (Fig. 29) on his left palm, while the other hand is in *Varad* or boon-conferring attitude. Close to him are *gopis*, gazing at him in sheer devotion and wonder. Towards his right is Balarama resting his hand on a *gopa's*, perhaps Nanda's (Fig. 30), shoulder. To his right is indeed a charming scene of a cowherd milking the cow (Fig. 30), the mother (cow) tenderly licking the calf in the most natural and realistic manner. Closeby a *gopi* balances a fodder bundle on her head even as she is holding a pile of milk-pots in a rope-sling. Beside her is a wood-cutter with his axe idle on his shoulder. Behind the cow is a mother with her child in her arms and further up a cowherd plays on the flute. All round is the cattle world (Fig. 30 a) and occasional cowherd couples dancing (Fig. 30 b). Beyond Krishna to the left, a little boy with boyish curiosity stands in front of a woman with a pile of milk-pots poised on her head while an old man carries a baby on his shoulder in rustic fashion. In short, the spirit of the sculpture here is that everything realistically depicts the total care-free spirit of the entire *Gokula* at the fury of Indra, who raised a storm to chastise the *gopis* but could not injure them, protected as they were by Lord Krishna by raising the Govardhana mount. The hill shows at one end a group of lions, griffins and a sphinx in their dens (Fig. 31), suggesting that Mt. Govardhana is a hill-forest, and a couchant bull at the other (Fig. 32) suggesting that below Mt. Govardhana was the *Gokula* or the cattle-world that Krishna protected by raising the mount. The griffins and sphinx remind us of their earlier representations in the *stupas* of Amaravati and Sanchi proving how earlier traditions persist. Thus in contrast to the critical view referred to already, at the other end is an appreciative one which hails the Govardhana scene as probably the best in India, even the Ellora one coming nowhere near this.

The advent of Krishna at Mamallapuram and *pari-passu* the Krishna-cult may now be considered.

Krishna and Balarama, of dark and white complexions respectively with the kite and discus for Krishna, and palmyra and plough for Balarama find a clear description in *Puram* (46 and 58) of *Sangam* literature as *Mayon* and *Valiyon*. Mayon is also equated with Veyyon, the sun-god. The still earlier *Narrinai* describes them as—

Mayon anna malvaraik-kava an
Valiyon anna vayangu vel aruvi.

Vishnu as Anantasayi is mentioned in *Pattuppattu*. Vishnu coming as a dwarf and assuming the Trivikrama form is referred to in *Manimekalai* and the *Tirukkural*. Poygaialwar of the 3rd century A. D. describes "Ulagu alanda murti". The *Mullaippattu* as well as the *Rigveda* referred to the *trivikrama* of Vishnu. The *Paripadal* (5th century A. D.) refers to Vishnu's iconographic forms such as Varaha, Trivikrama, Narasimha and Krishna. *Silappadikaram* refers to temples dedicated to Mayon and Valiyon as *Koyil*, *Kottam* and *Nagaram*. While *koyil* is clear, *kottam* is a rectangular shrine with a *sala* or wagon roof; *nagaram* is significant as it refers to the temple of the *nagara* class of a square *vimana* with a foursided domical roof. The inscription in Pallava-*grantha* in the Adivaraha temple (A.D. 650) enumerates for the first time in temple architecture the ten *avatars* of Vishnu in which Krishna is omitted and Buddha inserted, which accounts for similarity of the wagon roof *rathas* and *chaitya*-windows to Buddhist parallels. Anantasayi, the recumbent form of Vishnu and Tiruvengada, the standing form of Vishnu, are referred to in *Silappadikaram*. The question arises on the analogy of Kalinga temples (Bhuvanesvar, and Puri) as to what had happened in South India to the trio, Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra—the trio popular in Kalinga. Durga who is associated in one of her aspects with Krishna and Balarama as *Ekanamsa* or Subhadra is mentioned in *Silappadikaram* as *mal-avaraku ilangilai*, that is the sister of Mayon. But *Silappadikaram* lays emphasis on the other hand on associating Mayon with Nappinnai, one of the Aychchiyar (*Gopis*) as his favourite. Nappinnai is associated in later times with Niladevi. Valiyon, Mayon and Nappinnai take part in the dance called *Aychchiyar kuravai* described in Chapter 17 in *Silappadikaram*. This Krishna-Nappinnai cult is profusely described by Andal in her *Tiruppavai* (VV. 11-20) of the 9th century A. D. and Appar (A.D. 600) in saying *Erudan eluadarndan* refers to Krishna's fight with the seven bulls. According to *Tiruvaymoli* Krishna is said to have married Nappinnai after a bull-baiting contest (*Koleru taluvudal*), in which he defeated seven bulls by embracing them. *Tiruvaymoli* says

Vaimbu avil kodai Porutta
Malvidai elumadartta Sempavalat tiralvayan.

This peculiar Tamil tradition recorded in the *Sangam* literature and association of Krishna, Balarama and Nappinnai is reflected in the only sculpture of the kind in Mamallapuram in the Govardhana scene of the *Krishna mandapa*. The *mandapa* itself is later and covers a large rock-relief where Krishna raises Govardhana as an umbrella to protect the cowherds with their kine from the wrath of Indra. On the right half of the panel Balarama leans on the shoulder of a cowherd, perhaps Nanda (Fig. 30). Next to him stands Krishna and beside him is a lady marked out from the rest by her costume and head-dress (*karanda-makuta*) and pose (Fig. 29). She is leaning on an attendant lady. Her importance singles her out as Nappinnai, the beloved of Krishna. But for this and a carving of *Kaliyamardana* on the *Dharmaraja ratha*, scenes relating to Krishna are absent in the Pallava and contemporary rock-cut architecture of the Tamil country.

Not even one scene or episode from the Ramayana or of Rama is represented till we come to the early Chola temples of the 9th century A.D. (Nagesvaram, Kumbakonam, Kandiyur and Punjai). This absence in the earlier monuments is in contrast to what we notice in contemporary Chalukya and Rashtrakuta monuments of Badami, Ellora, Pattadakal and in Prambanam, Java. The principal forms of Vishnu as the *Sangam* literature has described them and the Alvars sang, are found in the cave, monolithic and structural temples of the Pallavas, of the Pandyas, Muttaraiyars and Adigaimans. They are standing, seated and reclining forms of Vishnu and Varaha, Narasimha, Trivikrama and Harihara. The standing form of Vishnu occurs in *Trimurti* cave in Mamallapuram, Kilmavilangai cave and lower cave, Trichinopoly. It also occurs as exterior sculptures in *Dharmaraja-ratha*, Adivaraha cave and in the cave temples of Sevillipatti and Tirumalaipuram and on the walls of Kanchi Vaikunthaperumal temple. Seated forms occur in Tirupparankunram, in Kuram, in Narasimha cave, Namakkal, and Kanchi Vaikunthaperumal temple. Reclining forms of Vishnu are many e.g., in Shore Temple, Cave temple in Singavaram, Tirutangal, Malaiyadipatti and Tirumeyyam. The classic example is however in the Mahishamardini cave, Mamallapuram (Fig. 21-g). Varaha is a stucco image in the Adivaraha Cave temple. It is found in stone in the *mandapa* of the Varaha cave temple, Mamallapuram, Tirupparankunram and at Namakkal. Narasimha, though not seen in Mamallapuram, was the principal deity in the Mahendravadi cave temple and Mamandur Cave Temple I, as also in Singaperumal koil, in cave temple of Anamalai and Narasimha cave temple, Namakkal. Narasimha also occurs in Tirupparankunram cave temple, Trivikrama occurs in Varaha, and Adivaraha Cave temples of Mamallapuram and at Namakkal. Besides being the earliest *avatara*-concepts, Varaha, Trivikrama and Narasimha have a special significance relating to imperial *Chakravarti* concept as follows:—Varaha symbolises redemption of the kingdom from evil, Narasimha—power and might, and Trivikrama symbolises conquest of other kingdoms. As such these three were the favourites of a succession of great dynasties e.g. Guptas, Chalukyas and Pallavas. The combination of Vishnu and Siva crystalised as Harihara and profusely described by the very early Alvars and Nayanmars is amply exemplified in the *Dharmaraja ratha*, Adivaraha cave temple, Mamallapuram, Namakkal and in other places.

TIGER CAVE OR YALIMANDAPAM (Fig. 33)

To Rajasimha we owe this erection of a rock-cut music hall or Sangita Mandapa in Saluvankuppam, 3 miles north of Mahabalipuram, popularly known as *Tiger Cave* or Yalimandapa, which is the only example of an ideal rock-cut stage existing in India. The only authentic music treatise that enumerates the characteristics of an ideal theatre is the *Natya Sastra* of Bharata, in which are described the construction of three types of auditoria, viz., the rectangular (*vikrishta*), the square (*chaturasra*), and the triangular (*tryasra*), graded as superior, middling and inferior types respectively. Chronologically speaking, we have an open air theatre from Nagarjunakonda (2nd century A.D.) excavated by one of us, which has been shifted to a high level as a sequel to the Nagarjunasagar dam project.

The Tiger Cave (Fig. 33) is the only structural example of a stage excavated out of unperishable material, a huge rock-boulder, which is cut on its eastern side facing the sea, the other three sides being unknown and rough. The Tiger Cave is an oblong pavilion closed on three sides with its floor level cut 6 feet high from the ground level in front. The dais is reached by a flight of four rock-cut steps provided with parapet flanks, and characterised by roughly hewn rampant lions one on either side, facing out. The lower-most step is a moon-stone (*chandrasila*). The two pilasters at either corners show rampant lions rearing forward and with riders on their backs looking out. The pavilion measuring 4 feet deep inside and 6 feet high is only a niche thrown into good relief by chiselling deeper the surrounding rock and providing on either side, two oblong niches marked by a *larmier* (*kapota*) on a line with the main niche. Its local name Yali-mandapam (*Vyala-mandapam*) is appropriate as the architect who designed it took advantage of the external sloping contour and semi-circular shape of the facade of the boulder, chiselled out an arched frieze of boldly cut out eleven large *vyala* heads which were mistaken by local people as "lion's heads" and "Tiger heads" while the top of this elliptical arched frieze displays the frontal view of three *vyala* (yali) faces, the lateral ones, four on each side, show the profiles of the *vyala* heads. This decorative motif is described in the *Paripadal* of the Tamil Literature of *Sangam* period (1st-2nd century A.D.) as the form of a pavilion with 'Tiger's faces' (*Madattukkai punai kilarvengai*), *Paripadal*-10-45.



30a



30b



29. *Krishna Mandapa. Krishna raising Mt. Govardhana, while Nappinnai (with high crown) stands on his left.*

30. *Krishna Mandapa. Gokula scenes, milking the cow, flute play, Balarama assuring Nanda.*

30a *Vrishni Goshtha, Krishna Mandapa.*

30b *Cowherd couple and cattle. Krishna Mandapa.*





31



32

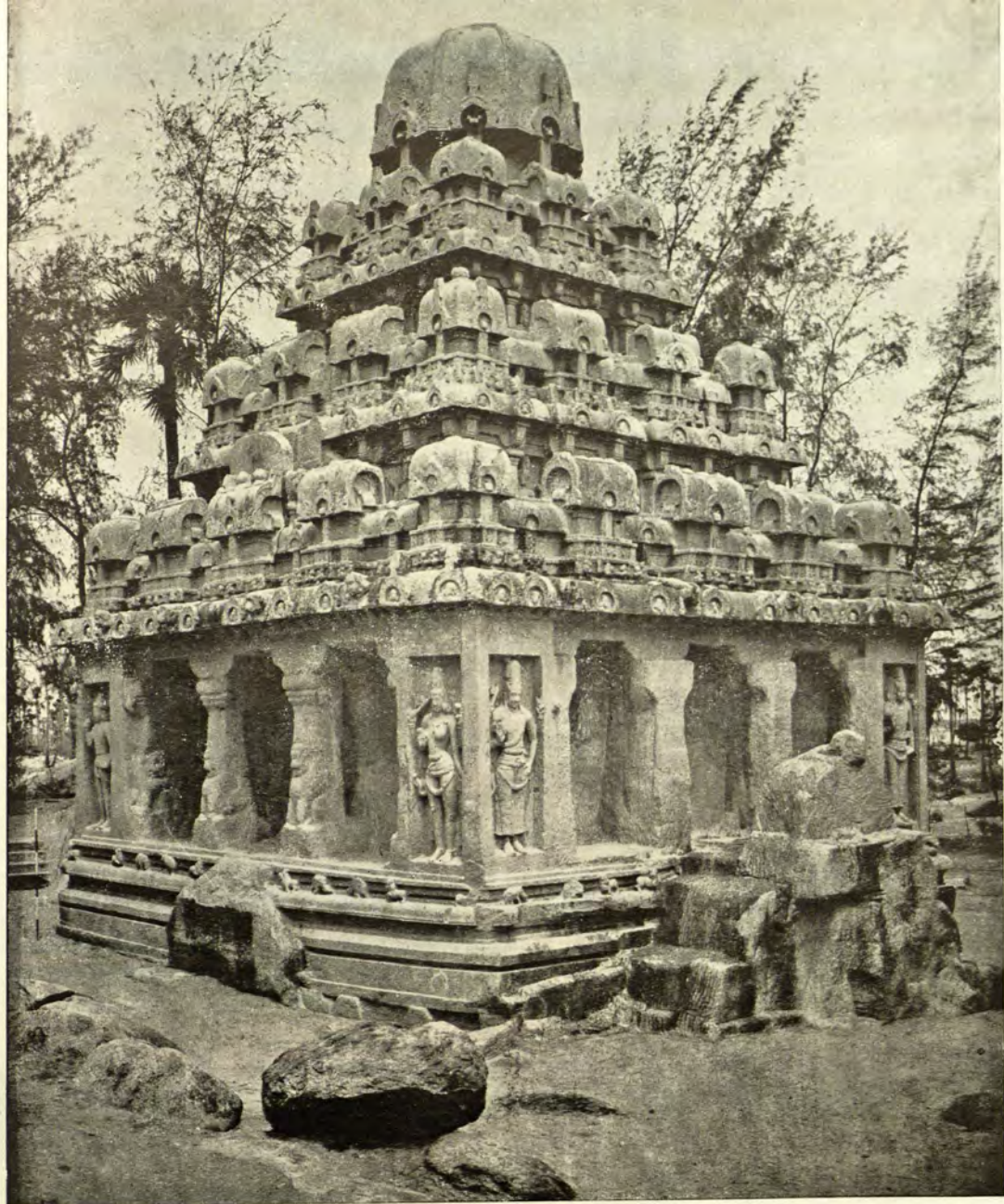


31. *Krishna Mandapa. Group of lions on Govardhana hill.*
32. *Krishna Mandapa. Couchant bull symbolical of Goshtha that Krishna protected.*
33. *Sangita or Pravacana Mandapa. (Yali mandapa) Rajasimha style (A.D. 700-28)*
34. *General view of Five Rathas. Mamalla style. (A.D. 630-668)*
35. *Dharmaraja Ratha (East and North). Square vimana of tritala variety with octagonal sikhara of Dravida order). Mamalla style (A.D. 630-668)*
- 35a *Panel of Somaskanda on the second storey of Dharmaraja Ratha.*
- 35b *Dharmaraja Ratha. Portrait sculpture of Narasimha I alias Mamalla. Mamalla period.*
- 35c *Dharmaraja Ratha. Siva as Ardhanari. Mamalla style.*
- 35d *Dancing Siva on Apasmara, Dharmaraja Ratha. Mamalla style.*
- 35e *Dharmaraja Ratha. Harihara. Mamalla style.*
- 35f *Dharmaraja Ratha—Skanda as Gurumurthi. Mamalla style.*
36. *Dancing Nataraja performing the dance Karana bhujanga trasa, from Siyamangalam cave temple of Mahendra I. (A.D. 580-630)*





35b



35



35a



35c



35d



90



36



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Two diametrically differing identifications of this pavilion have been offered by writers hitherto, viz., (1) a shrine of Durga, (2) an utsava mandapa or a resting place during festivals. Since no cell is carved at the back of this pavilion, obviously it would have been constructed for a purpose other than to enshrine Durga. On the northern face of the rock near the Shore Temple were carved similar lions with niches in their bosom and these were noticed on the wave-beaten rocks to the south of the Shore Temple. But here their niches revealed carvings of Durga, as circumstance that led writers to hail them as Durga shrines. The name of the place Saluvankuppam, where the Tiger cave is situated is a much later name after the Vijayanagara king Saluva Narasimha of the 15th-16th century A.D. which has nothing to do with the cave and the exact purpose for which it was put up by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman II *alias* Rajasimha (c. A.D. 700-28) has till now remained mysterious. A late Tamil inscription near Saluvankuppam two miles further north along the sea calls the place *Tiru-velucil* meaning (the beautiful elevation) which it may be said with certainty, refers only to this Tiger Cave, in the absence of any other in the vicinity.

The purpose of carving this odd cave by Narasimhavarman II, the builder of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, rouses our interest and curiosity to study this cave in detail and with care. Certainly Rajasimha would not have wasted his time in cutting out this pavilion without any purpose. A comparative study of other edifices put up by him in the Pallava territory, such as the one near the Shore at Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram is necessary as it throws some light on the problem in hand. The Kailasanatha temple has a series of *linga* shrines and the Shore Temple, its counterpart at Mahabalipuram is also for *linga* and Somaskanda carved on the back wall. But the Tiger Cave has neither the *linga* nor Somaskanda relief. If its purpose was a shrine, we should expect a *linga* and a Somaskanda relief, or if not the *linga*, at least a Somaskanda relief on the back wall of the niche as in the Dharmaraja ratha and Mahishamardini Cave. The inscriptions of Rajasimha from the Kailasanatha temple reveal to us the importance that he attached to music. Some of the titles borne by him such as 'Sri Vadya-vidyadhara', i.e., the possessor of knowledge of musical instruments, "Sri Atodya Tumburu", i.e., one on a par with Tumburu in the knowledge of musical instruments; and "Sri Vina Narada", i.e., one who resembles Narada in the playing of the vina, emphasise his taste and achievements in music. Such being the case did he construct this elevated cave for any musical purpose? The name *Tiruvelucil* meaning 'elevation' provides the answer, for, we do need an elevated place for musicians to sit and perform. In the absence of a structural auditorium, the performance was to be in an open-air theatre, and we may wonder how this could be possible especially when the roaring sea nearby with its rushing breakers would disturb the performance. But the calm and tranquility of the atmosphere and the acoustic property of the cave, herein to be described, clear all our doubts, for, the cutting of the niche in the elevated place with flanking alcoves and overhanging elliptical arch-frieze of *vyala* heads, both frontal and lateral, provide maximum comfortable acoustic property to this elevation, when the musician performs in it. As the musician performs the emanating waves of sounds which fall on the back wall of the niche are caught and pushed out, mellowed and softened, a phenomena due to the absorbing tendency of the back parent rock. The overhanging *vyala*-frieze checks the dispersion of the sound and its evaporation above. Thus the only course for the travelling sounds being frontal and forward, listeners sitting in front are treated with softened sounds, pleasant and enduring to hear. Disturbing vocal angularities are petrified and mollified by the back rocky surface. Thus listeners standing fifty feet away in front against a deterrent surface rock-crop would derive maximum spectacular pleasure (*Sahrdayananda*). This acoustic phenomenon of the Tiger Cave, when studied with care and attention helps in the identification of this cave as a *Pravachana-Mandapa* or more appropriately a *Sangita Mandapa* which can very well be styled according to Bharata's definition as *madhyama* variety of *mandapa*.

SMALLER YALI MANDAPAM

The Saluvankuppam *yali-mandapam* on a smaller scale or in parts, is what we notice near the Shore Temple to the south of it. It is carved on a rock beaten by the waves. On its western face is a smaller replica of the *Yali-mandapam* consisting of a small niche surrounded by a *vyala-torana*, which is as Sangam poetry records (*Paripadal*, 10-45) "*madattuk-kaipunai kilar-vengai*", meaning "facade of a building in the form of tiger's faces". Another rock called *Durga-rock*, shaped in the form of a recumbent lion shows at one end an elephant head with a howdah over it, containing the figure of Indra and at another end a pony and a few attendant figures.

On the surf line to the north of the Shore-temple is a large-rock-group, on the eastern face of which is a small cell with a bas-relief of eight-armed Durga carved on its hind wall. Flanking the cell are lion-based pilasters and panels of *Dvarapalikas*. On its northern face is the relief of a lion mauling Mahishasura, crudely carved. The foreshore near the Shore Temple and the *Yali-mandapam* at Saluvankuppam would appear to have been places of festivals like the *Indra vila* associated with Kaveripumpattinam or ancient Puhar of Sangam renown. The activity would appear

to have shifted from the *Shore Temple* area to Saluvankuppam *Tiruveluccil* area, perhaps in the time of Rajasimha as a result of which the place acquired a special name *Tiruvelucchiyur*, "the elevated place".

MONOLITHIC TEMPLES

Mahendra's worthy successor Narasimhavarman I, Mamalla (A.D. 630-58) initiated an ornate series of cut-in cave temples (already discussed), cut-out shrines strictly *vimanas* but popularly called *rathas* and a few bas-relief large compositions. The cave temples in the Mamalla style which continued in vogue for about two generations after him or were completions by his immediate successors are all confined to Mahabalipuram. Now we come to the most outstanding achievements of Mamalla namely the *rathas* which are cut-out shrines. Though they are called *vimanas* and *rathas* they are in fact large sculptures of architectural models carved out of entire boulders—truly a venture in which, Mamalla in his bid for doing something new, stole a march on his rivals in the Deccan and the south. The *rathas* are all confined to Mahabalipuram. They are nine. There was perhaps, a regular school of architecture and sculpture here in Mamalla's time. *Mandapa* fronts and models of shrines were being reproduced in stone side by side with large sculptures. The *Trimurti* cave temple deserves more to be added to the series of *rathas*. They are as follows arranged sequentially for the study of contemporary *vimana*-architecture—(1) Draupadi ratha, (2) Nakula-Sahadeva ratha, (3) Arjuna-ratha, (4) Dharmaraja ratha, (5) Bhima ratha (6) Ganesha ratha, (7) Southern Pidari ratha, (8) Valayankuttai ratha (9) Northern Pidari ratha, (10) Trimurti cave temple, (11) Bas relief models in Arjuna's penance, on the facade of the *Ramanuja-mandapa*, on the front *sikhara* face of the Sahadeva ratha and those on the end faces of the *sikharas* of the Bhima and Ganesa *rathas*.

The monolithic cut-out temples by their nature show not only the external appearance of a *vimana* with its *ardhamandapa* but also to a small extent the interior aspect. They also illustrate in their various stages of completion the method of carving which, unlike structural temples, proceeded from top downward. Another feature which requires explanation is that the *stupi* in these *rathas* is not integral with the monolith but a separate piece inserted into special sockets after completion of the *vimana* from *sikhara* downwards. In a structural temple the installation of the finial marks the completion of the structural work and coincides with the consecration (*kumbha-bhisheka*). Such a traditional agamic consecration by the installation of the finial obviously prevented the makers of the monolithic *vimanas* from carving the *stupi* first as should ordinarily be the case while the working proceeds from the top to the base. Three bas-relief miniatures in *Arjuna's penance* (Fig. 3) and *Ramanujamandapa* (Fig. 24) represent the simple *ekatala-vimana* with all the six *angas*, namely, *adhithana*, *pada* or *bhitti* (walls), *prastara* (entablature), *griva* or neck or clerestory, *sikhara* or roof and *stupi* (finial). The three shrine fronts of Trimurti cave show *dvitala-vimanas* shown in elevation upto the level of the first storey.

The five *rathas* form a group. *Draupadi*, *Arjuna*, *Bhima* and *Dharmaraja rathas* stand in a north-south line and are carved out of a single sheet of whale back rock cut into three convenient parts north to south (Fig. 34). The northern-most has been utilised for shorter Draupadi and Arjuna *rathas* with a common platform or *upapitha*. So that their *sikharas* coincide with the top line of the original rock. The central longer part has been utilised for the oblong Bhima ratha. The southern taller part of the rock which appears to have made a broader base has been utilised for the three-storeyed *Dharmaraja ratha*. The apsidal *Sahadeva-ratha* and the adjoining elephant sculpture were carved out of another separate boulder to the west of the main rock. Sculptures of the bull with a lion platform in front behind the Arjuna *ratha* and of the lion in front of Draupadi *ratha* are carved out of a separate outcrop on the east and a small but tall boulder on the west respectively. The two *Pidari rathas* and the *Valayankuttai ratha* are carved out of free standing boulders while the Ganesha ratha near Arjuna's penance is carved out of a boulder of the main hill. We had already remarked that the monoliths represent architectural models in which capacity they reproduce the various types of contemporary structural *vimanas* quite true to such details as timbering, fastening, metal work and appropriate decorative designs. These *vimanas* show the variations in plan, types of *sikharas*, and other architectural details such as *talas* and *angas*.

RATHAS

The architectural details of the *rathas* are dealt with first and then the sculptures. The *Draupadi ratha* is a *kutagara* which is the type of a simple hut, square on plan, with all the *angas* of the *vimana* except the *prastara* and *griva*. It represents the *kuta* type with a domical *sikhara* crowned by a single *stupi* also square on plan. Such a four sided *sikhara*, in conformity with the parts below represents the *Nagara* order in its pure form. The bas-relief shrines in *Arjuna's penance* and *Ramanujamandapa* represent this type. They show the *Nagara sikhara* and represent the *ekatala*-variety. The *dvitala*-variety of the *nagara* order is represented by the *Valayankuttai ratha* and the northern *Pidari-ratha*, square throughout. The *Arjuna ratha* and southern *Pidari-ratha* illustrate square *vimanas* of the

dvitala-variety with octagonal *sikhara* of the *Dravida* order. Being four-sided from base to *prastara* including the *talas* and with octagonal *griva* and *sikhara*, the two *rathas* represent a composite variety (*misra*) of the *Dravida* order. The Dharmaraja-ratha is a *tritala*, three storeyed example with the same type of *sikhara* with all the three square *talas* intended for use. A pure variety of the *Dravida* order is represented at the front of the Nakula-Sahadeva-ratha but it is hexagonal on plan from basement to finial. The Bhima ratha and Ganesha ratha are *vimanas* of the *gyatasra* (oblong) type of *koshtha* or *sala* with wagon top roofs (*sala-sikhara*) and with a number of *stupis* on the ridge. The Bhima ratha is an *ekatala* and the Ganesha-ratha a *dvitala* example of this class. At either end-arch of the Ganesha ratha, two miniature shrine models are carved which illustrate tall column-like *vimanas* circular in section from base to top representing the *Vesara* order. Both are two storeyed. The composite variety of the *Vesara* order square upto the *prastara* with circular *griva* and *sikhara* is illustrated by the bas-relief models at either end of the roof of the Bhima ratha. Nakula-Sahadeva ratha represents the apsidal form (*dyvasra*) or two sided or two right angled with apse-end. From its resemblance to the hind part of the elephant as shown in comparison with the adjoining carving of the elephant purposely meant for a comparison, this type is called *Gajaprishta* or *Hastiprishta* in Sanskrit, or *tunganaimadam* in Tamil. Because of its *vritayata* (elliptical) shape, though truncated at one end, this type has also to be reckoned as *Vesara*. This ratha is of the *dvitala* vimana class. *Vimanas* with more than one storey carry over the *prastara*, a string of miniature *vimanas* consisting of (1) *kutas*, also called *karna-kutas* being miniature square *vimanas* with domical roof and single *stupa* arranged at the corners of the shrine top. (2) *Salas* also called *koshthas* which are oblong *vimanas* with wagon-top *sikhars* having more than one *stupa*, placed over the sides of the shrine-top, and (3) *panjaras* also called *nidas* and *nasikas* which are miniature apsidal *vimanas* placed between the *kutas* and *salas*. All these are inter-connected by cloisters (*harantara*). The *karna-kutas* and cardinal *salas* are found in all the Mahabalipuram examples. The *panjaras* are however added to the string only in the Nakula-Sahadeva ratha and the *mukhamandapa* of the first tala of the Dharmaraja ratha. In the Bhima ratha the place of the *panjar* is taken by sets of smaller pairs (*kshudra nasikas*). The *haras* enclose a circumambulatory passage surrounding the central structure of the storey as noticed in the Bhima and Dharmaraja *rathas*, while in the other cases they agree with the central structure of the storey (*harmya*). The Trimurti-cave temple, though a cave temple, finds a place in the ratha, being a good example of three contiguous but truncated *dvitala-vimanas* shown in their front elevations with the *hara*-lengths over the *prastara* of the first tala, details of the second tala and the other members not being shown.

The *rathas* are neither chariots nor cars nor have they anything to do with the heroes of *Mahabharata*. They are really simple fanes intended for the worship of Siva, Durga, Skanda and certain other deities as we shall see presently. Dharmaraja ratha, Bhima ratha, Arjuna ratha and Draupadi ratha run from south to north and form an intriguing cluster of monoliths, while the fifth Nakula-Sahadeva ratha stands apart to the west of the row. In addition to these there are a lion, an elephant and a bull carved in the round suggesting or supplying the clues to the identification of the *rathas*. In the *rathas* we see the simple original types from which the stupendous edifices of later days grew—(a) the pyramidal multi-storey-*vimana* type of Dharmaraja ratha and Arjuna ratha which flowered into the styles of later Pallava and early chola architecture like the Shore Temple, Kailasanatha, Vaikunthaperumal temples at Kanchi, Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore and the temples of Gangaikonda-cholapuram and Tribhuvanam; (b) The *Gajaprishtakriti* multi-storey-*vimana* type of Nakula-Sahadeva ratha, which served as a model for examples called *Tunganaimadam* designed here and there in South India in later epochs, (c) Wagon-shaped multi-storey-gopura type of Bhima-ratha which became the proto-type of the tall gateways of the Pandya-Vijayanagara Nayak styles.

SCULPTURES IN THE RATHAS

A word about the origin of Pallava art is necessary to understand Mahabalipuram sculptural art. The remarkability of Mahendravarman I, the royal artist was that he became a *Vichitra-chitta* as he was versatile, and a "tiger among sculptors" (*chitrakarapuli*) as he continued in the sculptural art of his times the best traditions from the Krishna valley observed in the Vishnukundin caves at Moghul-rajapuram. Being the grandson of the Vishnukundin King Vikrama Mahendra through his daughter, the traditions of his maternal grand-father's realm and art made a deep impression on him, for example, the *dvarapalas* in Mahendravarman's caves with the arrangement of their hair in a large mass on either side of the face resting on their shoulders, with the ornaments, waist bands, heavy club hands on the waist or raised in wonder or in tarjani, with thick *yajnopavita* over the right arm in *nivita* fashion as in early Western Chalukya and in Vishnukundin figures. Vishnu's crown is very high and cylindrical, drapery heavy, waist girdle with prominent loops and tassels and undergarment worn like the curved elephant trunk (*hasti-saundika*). Excellent sculpture of this early period of Pallava art can be noticed at Tiruchirapalli where in the Gangadhara panel, acclaimed as the noblest creation of Pallava art, we notice the dignified figure of Siva receiving with seeming indifference the proud stream of river Ganga on two of his locks. In the cave at Tirukkalikunram we notice an

attractive carving of a prince. Nearer home, the gigantic bas-relief group depicting Arjuna's penance is a great masterpiece, the authorship of which may rightly go to Mahendra for reasons discussed already (see above). Equally important is the scene where Krishna raises Mt. Govardhana and protects Gokula. Seshasayi-Vishnu, Mahishamardini, Varaha and Gajalakshmi are great master pieces of eternal value. The portrait panels of Mahendra and Simhavisnu with their queens in the Adivaraha cave and Narasimhavarman's portrait on the Dharmaraja ratha show how carefully the Pallava sculptor excelled in portraiture. It may with truth be said that the dynamic Mahishamardini panel is such a masterpiece that it inspired the same theme at Ellora in a similar mode of depiction. In short we have to seek the inspiration for early Pallava art in the Satavahana art of Amaravati of the second century A.D. and the Ikshvaku sculptures of Nagarjunakonda of the 3rd century A.D.

Later Pallava carving reveals greater detail of workmanship, agility, lighter anatomy and more developed artistic finish. Sculptures of the temples at Kanchipuram such as Vaikunthaperumal, Airavatesvara, Muktesvara, Matangesvara and Satyamangalam specially the group of *Sapta-matrikas*, Siva as Virabhadra and Yoga Dakshina-murti are more slender, with face elongated, and are fine examples of late Pallava work. Pallava sculpture is rich in iconography and the various forms of Siva, Vishnu and Devi are an interesting study. Kaverippakkam, a good centre of late Pallava sculpture, represents a fusion of Rashtrakuta elements in Pallava art consequent on the Rashtrakuta occupation of a part of the Pallava country for a while. The Pallava queen Reva and her son Dantivarman, obviously named after his maternal grandfather Danti of the Rashtrakuta dynasty suggest the relationship that brought about influences in art. The lotus, lily and pearl decoration of Yajnopavita, lion-head clasp for armlet and girdle in late Pallava sculpture which are similar to Chalukya and Rashtrakuta art parallels show the streams that flowed into the simpler Pallava art. The Somaskanda figure is a pivot of the Saiva art of the Pallava period. This form of Siva was a great favourite and is repeated in almost every Pallava shrine. The triple cells for the Trimurti was a feature till the middle of the seventh century. It is this idea that crossed the seas and passed beyond the shores of India to Java to blossom into the triple-vimana for the three deities at Prambanam.

The *rathas*, particularly the Arjuna and Dharmaraja *rathas* contain some of the finest Pallava sculptures. The *Draupadi-ratha* contains in the shrine bas-relief of Durga cut on the back wall of the *sanctum* while the *Arjuna-ratha* has an empty cell with traces of plaster on the back wall showing that the consecrated deity was a painting or stucco relief. The top storey of the Dharmaraja *ratha* contains a Somaskanda panel carved by Paramesvaravarman I. The Trimurti cave temple contains reliefs of Siva, Vishnu and Brahma-sasta or Gurumurti in its three shrine-cells. None of the rest, all incomplete, contain any sculpture in the cell. There is neither any trace of a rock-cut *linga* inside the *sanctum* nor any example nor a water outlet in the form of a spout generally found on the northern side of a shrine. Lion or *vyala*-based pillars or pilasters are found in front of the *ardha-mandapa* of the *Dharma-raja*, *Bhima*, *Arjuna* and *Nakula Sahadeva rathas*, the last having in addition a pair of elephant-based pilasters. *Makara-toranas* also called *bhitti-toranas* on pilasters, spanning entrances or enclosing niches (*devakoshtas*) are met with in the *Draupadi ratha*, *Valayan-kuttai ratha* and in the northern *Pidari-ratha*. *Kudu*-arches are also fully formed in the *kapotas* of the various *talas*.

DHARMARAJA RATHA (Fig. 38)

The *Dharmaraja ratha* is hailed as a marvel of monolithic art. Why! Even if it stood alone in the sunny landscape of South India, its scenic effect is all the greater. Apart from the grandeur of its design the figures of gods and men carved in the niches of the first three storeys and the brief words inscribed in bold and flowery letters arrest our attention. The inscriptions are short epigraphs beginning with *Sri Narasimha* and ending with *Atyantakama Pallavesvara griham, Ranajaya*. Two names, *Sribhara* and *Srinidhi* also appear in the surnames enumerated in the inscriptions. Strangely enough the same words are also read in the Pallava coins found in Mahabalipuram. The coin bearing the legend *Sribhara* shows a standing bull on the obverse and a wheel on the reverse. Another coin bearing the legend *Srinidhi* also found in Mahabalipuram shows a standing bull on the obverse and a fish on the reverse (*S.I.I. Vol. I. p. 2*). Such coins were evidently Pallava issues of Narasimhavarman I. A brief inscription in highly florid letters on the east side of the third storey reading as *Atyantakama-Pallavesvara-griham* suggests subsequent work in the Dharmaraja *ratha* in the days of Paramesvaravarman I. Certain peculiarities in this monolith are: (1) heads of men and monkey serving as gorgoyles or water outlets above the ground floor. (2) Frieze below the cornice of the ground floor representing a garland carried by men and *ganas* as in Bharhut, Sanchi, Mathura, Amaravati and Gandhara.

With the aid of a ladder we reach the first floor of this *ratha* where in a shrine, we come across the Somaskanda relief, that is, Siva seated with Uma and Skanda. Uma is looking at Siva instead of at the spectator as is normal. The usual paraphernalia of howering *ganas* with *chamara* and flanking Brahma and Vishnu can be noticed. The external face of the *ratha* bears in rectangular niches images



of divinities and some two-armed figures also, some of which are unfinished. The panels can be identified as follows—

LOWER ROW (Ground floor facing south, beginning from east) Siva, Narasimhvarman;

Facing west—Siva, Siva,

Facing north—Brahma, Harihara

Facing east—Ardhanari and Skanda.

Thus in all, the ground floor consists of eight sculptured panels on the four corner blocks, one each representing Harihara (Fig. 35e), Brahma and Skanda as Gurumurti (Fig. 35-f); three show figures of Siva four-armed, one of them with elaborate matted hair; and another represents Narasimhavarman I himself (Fig. 35g) whose titles 'Sri Mekha' and 'Trailokya-varhdhana-vidhi' are inscribed above the statue in Pallava Grantha characters. Ardhanarisvara (Fig. 35c) is in fact the last image at the back and facing east. As a combination of Siva and Parvati, the masculine features and weapons of the Siva-half is perfectly balanced in this figure and the graceful feminine anatomy and the sportive lotus in the half figure of Parvati makes it the most delightful sculpture *par excellence* of the early Pallava age.

The images in the middle row or the central tier show features which are frequent in later iconography. In a deeply carved panel in the centre in the north, occurs a four-armed Siva as Gangadhara with a rosary in his upper right hand and with Ganga adoring to his left. To the right of this panel we notice Vishnu carrying a *chakra* and *sankha* in his upper arms while his lower left hand rests on Garuda who as his mount stoops to support his weight. Beyond this is a panel of astounding interest to artists, for, in it we notice one of the earliest representations of Nataraja in the Tamil land though this form became very popular later on in South Indian iconography. Siva is dancing on *Apasmara* and is four-armed (Fig. 35-d). An answer is found here to the question of relative antiquity of Nataraja, the *advallan* and his occurrence in early Pallava sculpture. Another allied question that arises from this is how far Tamil literature has given an adequate place to the dance of Siva as an absorbing theme. Both *Devaram* and *Pre-Devaram* literature allude to this God and to particular types of dances for the different gods. The *Silappadikaram* is one among the early works which contain an elaborate description of *Kodukotti* of Siva, *Pandavangam* of Bharati, *Alliyattoguli* and *Malladal* of Vishnu, *Tudi* and *Kudai* of Muruga, *Kudakkuttu* of Krishna, *Pedi* of Manmatha, *Marakkal* of Durga, *Pavai* of Seyyol (Lakshmi) and *Kadayam* of Indrani. When did the dances of Siva sublimated into the *ananda tandava* of Natesa, the *advallan*. A correct answer to this will perhaps be the most important contribution of the Tamil land in the field of concept (*Kalpna*), art (*Kala*) and *Silpa* (*Karma*). *Silpa* is poetry while prose is iconography. The *devaram* has references to Siva's dance particularly those referring to the poses suggesting iconography. For example, Sambandar mentions Siva dancing as *Puyangar* (576) and *Kalitanperiya kuttu* (124). The latter is *Kalikatanava* with the fire in one hand. The former is *bhujangatrassa*, the 58th *karana*. "*Kalal valar kal kunchittu adinam*" is the expression that Sambandar adopts to refer to the *Kunchita* pose of Siva's leg. His dancing to passify Uma, jealous on seeing Ganga on his head, to the recitation of *Sama gana* is sung by Appar (4428), a theme elaborated in early sculpture. "The anklets of the legs jingling, with fire in the hand, the tresses sweeping the directions, the Lord danceth", is how he describes in decade (4528) Siva's dance. The famous verse *Kunitta puruvamum edutta porpadaa*. (*Kunchita*) is too well known. The *vattu* dance of Siva with the heads of Vishnu and Brahma is also mentioned by Appar. Sundarar and Manikavachagar describe the attributes in three of the four hands of Siva dancing in *Sirrambalam* as *damaru*, fire and snake. Pallava sculpture amply corroborates the hymns of the hymnists thereby indicating their mutual chronological relation. The earliest sculpture of dancing Siva is from the Cave temple in Siyamangalam (Fig. 36) of Mahendra I (A.D. 580-630), where it is *bhujangatrassa* (fright caused by cobra) with cobra rearing up by the side as in the earlier Chalukyan example in Badami. On the northern wall of the second *tala* of the *Dharmaraja ratha* is another niche showing Siva dancing before Tanduvu who is imitating him. The *talasamphotita* dance pose, a favourite of Rajasimha, is what we find in the Kailasanatha temple, Kanchi and Olakkannisvara temple. It is only in the eighth century A.D. that the crouching figure of *Apasmara* which has a *gana*-like form is noticed below the feet of Natesa. A noteworthy example of A.D. 773 occurs in the Tirupparankuram Cave temple where Siva dances in *chatura* pose over *Apasmara* watched by Uma and celestials, while Vishnu and others play on musical instruments. This is almost the earliest in the Tamil country of this kind of dance with paraphernalia, though similar contemporaneous forms particularly with *Apasmara* occur in the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Pattadakal (A.D. 733-46). At Aihole, both eight-armed *Urdhvajanu*-Natesa and four-armed *Chatura*-Natesa with *Apasmara* below occur. At Vijayawada, in the Moghulrajapuram cave occurs a peculiar type of eight-armed *Urdhvajanu* Natesa with *Apasmara* below, and similar to this and other respects is Nallur Nataraja bronze of later Pallava period. The Kuram Nataraja bronze of late Pallava is a four-armed *Urdhvajanu* dancing on *Apasmara*. The fragmentary Pallava painting in Panamalai of Rajasimha's period represents the *Urdhva-tandava*. The earliest representation of the typical *ananda tandava* form of Nataraja occurs in the Tiruvalisvaram temple (A.D. 900) probably of Pandya origin. But a look at the *bhujangatrassa*

dance of Siva at Siyamangalam (Fig. 36) with the rearing cobra below the *kunchita* leg and drummer behind and singing *gana* beside makes us come face to face as early as A.D. 630 with the *bhujangatrasa karana*, the *kunchitapada* and other accessories of that vital form of Nataraja which was to crystallise into the superb *ananda-tandava* form of Nataraja popular in the early Chola period. Subsequent typical Nataraja forms in stone and bronze as for example the Tiruvalangadu specimen are too well known. The Tiruvalisvara Nataraja sets the earlier limit (A.D. 900) for the *ananda-tandava* specimen with *Apasmara*. It also sets the later limits for the Nayanars. Appar mentions *Muyalaka* (*Apasmara*) in four contexts (*Devaram* 5130, 6590, 7139 and 7185) and this mention is important, as, at the commencement of the eighth century we find an implicit reference from Appar to Siva's subjugation of *Muyalaka* first by trampling over him and then his subsequent protection under his feet—an apt description that the sculptor has readily adopted. It is Manickavachagar alone that refers to *ananda-tandava* as *anandakkuttu* which he danced for the sake of Patanjali (*Tiruvachagam* 588, *Kirtit-tiru-ggaval*—line 138).

Coming to the Dharmaraja ratha, beyond this form of Natesa dancing on *Apasmara* we encounter a four-armed Siva holding a drum and rosary in his upper arms and leaning on the bull, a special form called *Vrishabhantika murti*. To the left of the central panel is a four-armed *Kiratamurti* with bow in one hand, another hand resting on the shoulders of Arjuna to whom he gave *Pasupatastra* as a boon. Alternately, it may be *Chandesanugrahamurti* adorning Chandesha with a garland. If so, this is the earliest sculpture depicting the story of Siva blessing Chandesha and making him his *mulabhritya*. Thanks to the impetus given by the *Devaram* hymnists, the *ashtaparivara* included the shrine of Chandesha from the later Pallava period and this became in the succeeding epochs a regular feature of Siva temples in the Tamil country. As this occurs on the second tala of the Dharmaraja ratha which was brought to its present stage of completion by Paramesvaravarman I, we can gauge for this icon as early a date as A.D. 670-700. The Somaskanda relief in the central shrine of the Mahishamardini cave temple where also work continued till the time of Paramesvaravarman I, is unique and helpful in our search for early occurrence of Chandesha in that it contains besides Siva, Uma, Skanda with Vishnu and Brahma in the background on either side, a recumbent bull and a devotee kneeling and Siva holding what appears to be a garland in one of his hands. There are at least 18 references to the story of Chandesha in the hymns of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar. A few more sculptures of Chandesha occur in the Pallava structural temples. It was Raja Raja I (A.D. 985-1014) that gave a prominent and separate place for Chandesha immediately to the north of the vestibule of the *vimana* in Tanjore and thereafter it has become a regular feature in the plan of all Siva temples till today. The best sculpture of Chandesha is the one occurring in Gangaikondacholapuram built by Rajendra Chola I. While in Mamallapuram it is a mere sculpture depicting the story of Chandesha, Chandesha comes to occupy a position equal to that of other deities in the *ashtaparivara* of the Pallava-Chola transition. It is essentially due to the God's recognition by the Nayanmars, which again *inter alia* is an indication of the age of the three Nayanmars as between A.D. 650-800. In this respect Chandesha enjoys a unique preference among the earlier devotees even perhaps prior to the *Devaram* hymnists. The bow in Siva's hand lends greater support to *Kiratarjunamurti* as the form meant than *Chandesanugrahamurti*. The next panel in the Dharmaraja ratha contains a four-armed Siva in the company of a dancing attendant who is probably Tanduvu, though certain writers have been tempted to identify him as Bharata which it cannot be, because it is a *gana* figure. The last panel is also a representation of four-armed Siva as Vinadhara Dakshinamurti (Fig. 37). Among the Tamil hymnists, Appar and Sambandar (5214, 2388) have given us in their songs a graceful description of this God much as we behold in the Dharmaraja ratha panel.

Among the corresponding panels on the south, the central one shows four-armed Vishnu standing. The second panel to the right contains an interesting scene revealing Krishna subduing Kaliya who has three hoods. This is easily the earliest representation in sculpture, wherein Krishna is performing a boat-dance or *vichitra tandava* by catching hold of the tail of Kaliya and using it as an oar. That Kaliya is in water region is suggested by two turtles below. In the corresponding panel to the left occurs a four-armed Siva overcoming Andhakasura. In three of his hands Siva is carrying the cobra, *sula* and axe. Of the other four panels representing Siva, the most interesting from the point of view of instrumental music is the Vinadhara Dakshinamurti form of Siva who trims the *vina* with two hands and the other two hands beat the castanets (Fig. 37a).

Among the three figures to the west, the one on the southern end represents a worshipper with a basket of flowers (*Kodalar*, Fig. 38). The corresponding figure at the northern end is of Siva as *Kankalamurti*, to the left of whom is a *dvarapala*. Here, corresponding to the one below is a portico on two pillars. To the east adjoining the steps are four panels showing adoring ascetics. One of them a wandering mendicant is singing to the drone of an *ektar* held by his left hand (Fig. 39).

In the east and north of the storey above, is shown in the centre Surya with a halo behind, wearing a *karanda mukuta* and cross-straps (*channavira*), the right hand with lotus and the left resting



37. Dharmaraja Ratha. Vinadhara
Dakshinamurti (A.D. 672-700)
- 37a Dharmaraja Ratha. Vinadhara
Dakshinamurti (A.D. 672-700)
38. Dharmaraja Ratha. Worshipper
with Kodalar (flower basket)
(A.D. 672-700)
39. Dharmaraja Ratha. Mendicant
ministrel singing with ektar
(A.D. 672-700)
40. Dharmaraja Ratha. Surya.
(A.D. 672-700)
41. Dharmaraja Ratha. Siva.
(A.D. 672-700)



37



37a



38



39

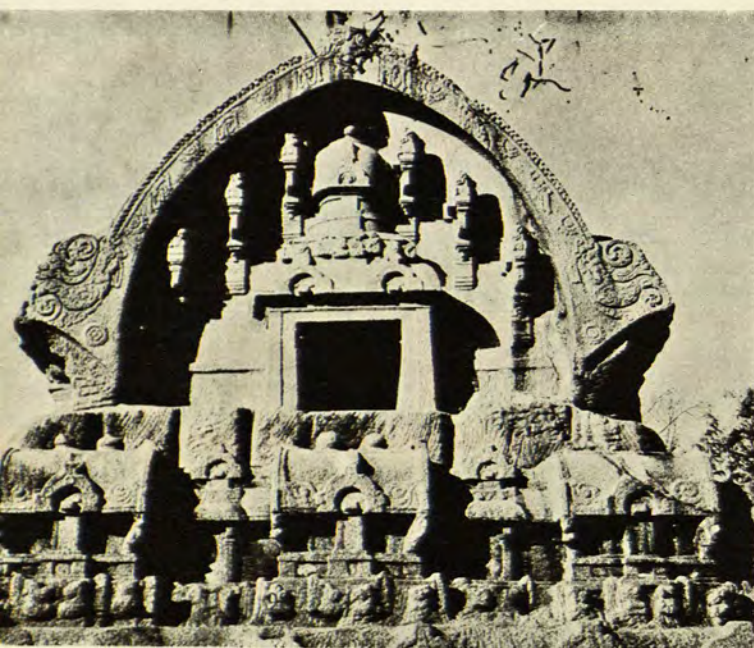
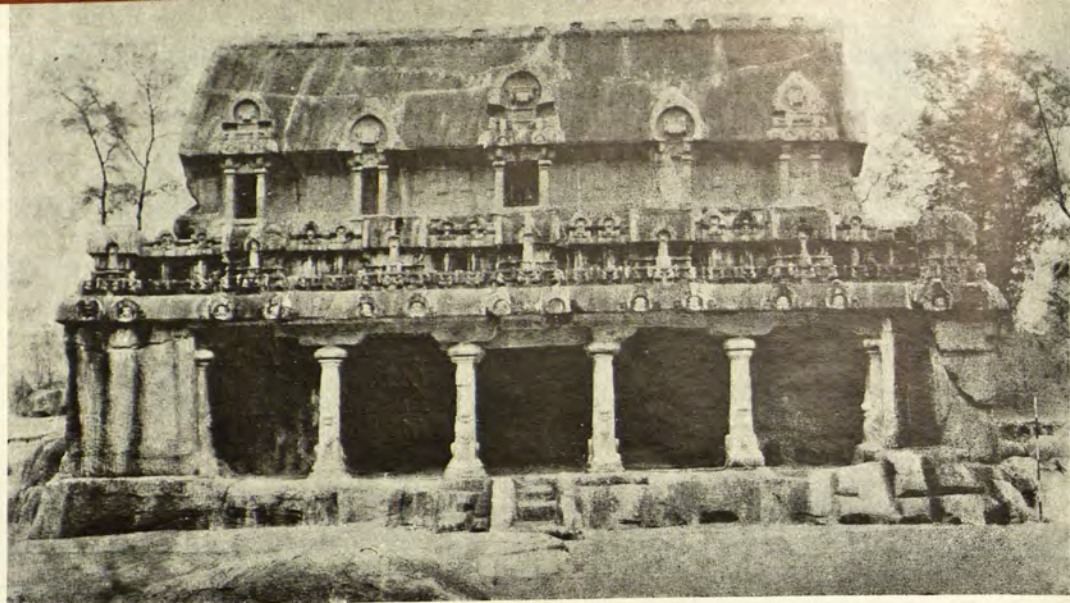


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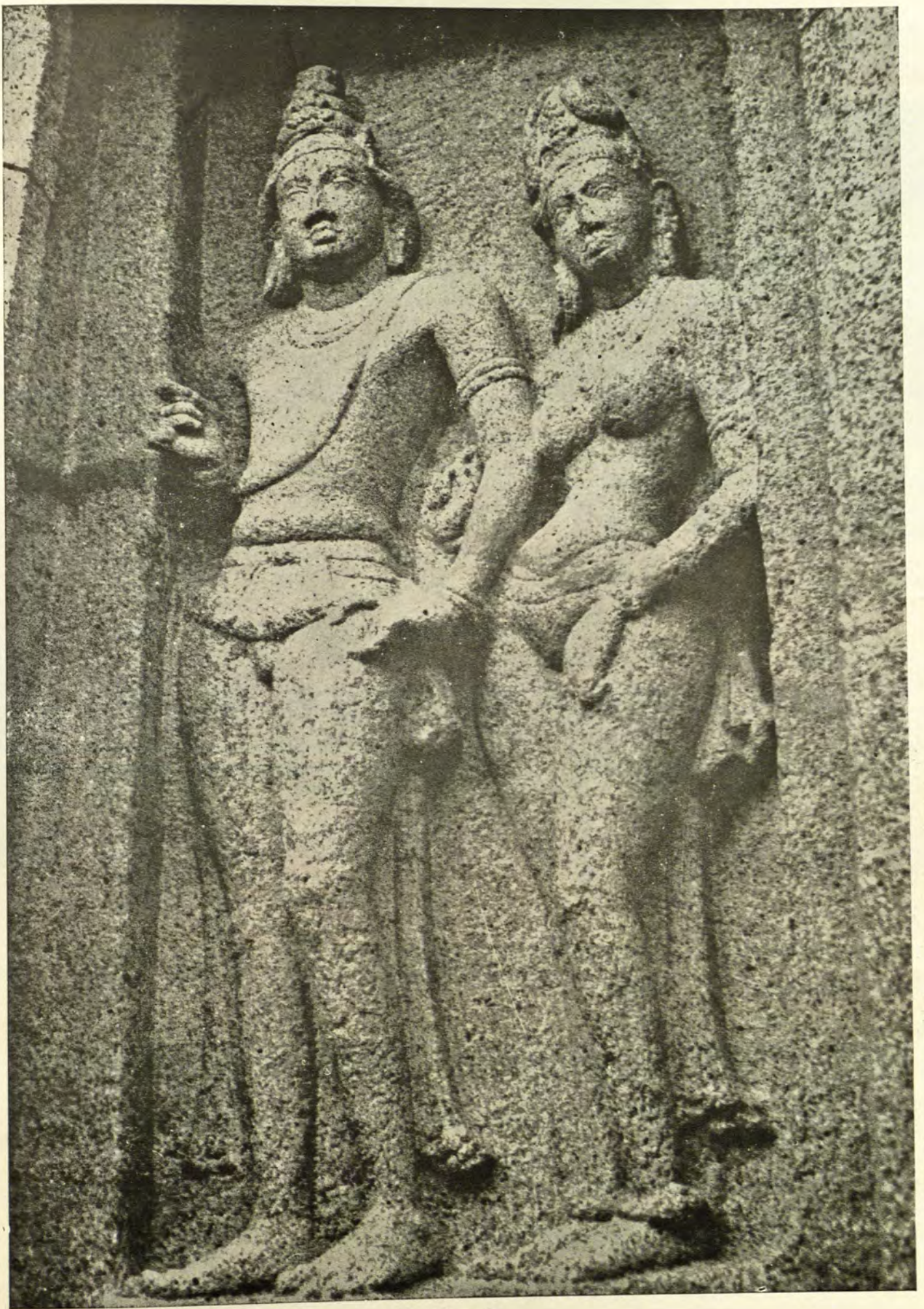
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42. *Bhima Ratha. Oblong vimana of ektala variety with wagon-top roof and with a number of stupas on the ridge. Mamalla style.*

43. *Model of shrine in Bhima Ratha. Mamalla style.*

44. *Arjuna Ratha. Square vimana of dvitala variety with octagonal Sikhara of Dravida order. Mamalla style.*

45. *Arjuna Ratha. Skanda on elephant. Mamalla period.*



46. *Arjuna Ratha. Mithuna, probably celestial. Mamalla style.*



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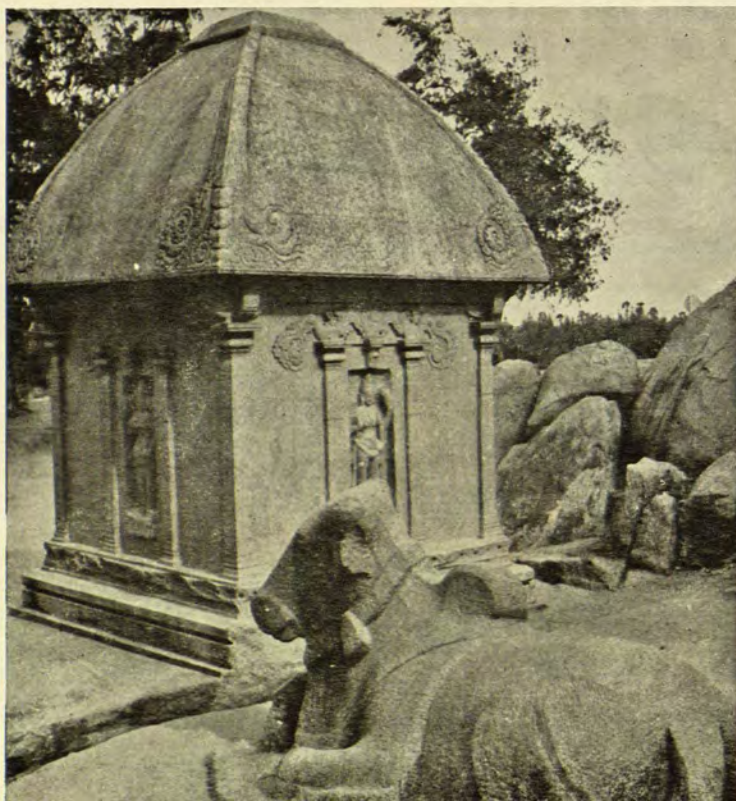


47. *Arjuna Ratha. Bearded Rishi worshipper of Skanda as Brahmasasta. Mamalla period.*

48. *Arjuna Ratha. Women mithuna in an alluring pose. Mamalla period.*

48a *Dvarapala. Arjuna Ratha Mamalla style.*

49. *Draupadi Ratha which is a Durga temple. It is of Kutagara type with domical Sikhara crowned by single stupa. Mamalla style.*



49

on the hip (Fig. 40). To the south is Siva wearing a *Jatabhara* or a mass of matted hair (Fig 41). All the figures are flanked by two devotees, one on either side. To the west is a cell on the hind wall of which is a representation of four-armed seated Somaskanda with Uma and baby Skanda and flanked by Brahma and Vishnu. There are *dvarapalas* guarding the entrance of the cell. In the middle row (first floor) facing north, two male figures in a niche were taken by French archaeologists (Dubreuil) to be Siva and Markandeya and by Dutch archaeologists (Vogel) as Rama and Lakshmana. But the Rama-cult spread at a far later date in South India. This scene we have identified as Siva with Chandesa as an alternative to Kiratarjunamurti with Arjuna, preferably the latter.

BHIMA RATHA (Fig. 42)

The next temple with a roof shaped like the hood of a wagon is like Dharmaraja ratha almost completed in the upper part, while the lower part is unfinished. This building represents a stone model of a wooden structure whose wooden origin is particularly obvious in the treatment of the upper storey (Fig. 43). The sculptors have taken pains to reproduce the ends of square headed transverse beams needed to support the curved rafter of the roof in a wooden building of this kind. The curvilinear roof here and in the Draupadi ratha suggests its origin from the thatched huts with paddy grass covering. The temple is elongated on a rectangular base and supported lengthwise by four pillars and two pilasters (Fig. 43). False *chaitya* windows (*kudus*) and pavilion are similar to that of the Dharmaraja ratha. The side of the roof reminds us of Buddhist chaityas at Karle, Bhaja, Nasik, Lomas rishi and Ajanta (Caves X and XII). This ratha curiously enough is devoid of sculptures and inscriptions. Its elongated plan though unfinished leads to the surmise that probably a reclining form of Vishnu was intended to be enshrined.

ARJUNA RATHA (Fig. 44)

North of Bhima ratha stands Arjuna ratha which is a copy on a small scale of the Dharmaraja ratha. Its interior provides a roomy shelter which has been damaged by use as a rest house by vagrants. An attractive feature of this ratha is a group of secular sculpture. Three sides of the main body of the ratha contain five panels each. In the corner panels are *dvarapalakas* (Fig. 48a). In the central panels are Siva leaning on Nandi on the south, Vishnu on Garuda on the north, and Indra or Skanda on elephant on the east (Fig. 45). In the other panels are *mithuna* figures or couples (Fig. 46). One of the panels on the east shows a *rishi* carrying in his right hand what appears to be a spud and followed by a younger ascetic (perhaps a *sisya*) holding a flower basket (*pukkodalai*) (Fig. 47). When we remember that the spud is the distinguishing mark of the famous hymnist Appar, we are tempted to identify this figure as an ascetic devotee engaged with the spud in clearing temple precincts of thorns. The next panel of importance is that of the God on the elephant (Fig. 45). Since Sangam literature provides Skanda with elephant as his mount we can take the God as Subrahmanya and treat the shrine as that of Skanda. It is surprising that excepting one or two cases, temples solely dedicated to Skanda as the principal deity are not seen and even sculptures representing him during the period A.D. 600-1000 are meagre. Judging from the literary reference afforded by *Tirumurugarruppada* (109-110), we can identify the elephant-riding God as Skanda with the posture of the right hand wielding *ankusa*. In this light the bearded ascetic with the spud acquires significance, for, he looks like the bearded *dvarapala* standing in front of the *Brahma Sasta* shrine in the Trimurti Cave Temple. For this reason and also because of the occurrence of this figure on the flank of the elephant-rider in the central panel facing east of the Arjuna ratha, we may not be wrong in identifying this ratha on the analogy of the Trimurti shrine as of *Brahma Sasta*, which is an aspect of Subrahmanya in which he put down the pride of Brahma by exposing the ignorance of the Vedas. In some of the other panels of the Arjuna ratha we have *mithunas* and *dvarapalas* some of which reveal the attempt of the sculptor to represent the figures in full and three quarters profile, bespeaking the sculptor's mastery and skill. Similar *mithunas* are also portrayed in the panels of the upper storey. Some of the *mithuna* couples have been taken by earlier writers to be portraits of Pallava kings with their queens such as Paramesvaravarman I and his queen, Rajasimha and his queen. But this cannot be as in all the couples the male has the *yajnopavita* thrown over the right arm in *nivita* fashion (Fig. 46), as is the case with all gods and demigods in Pallava sculpture (*Nivitam Devanam*). Also the figures wear *karanda mukutas* as in the case of Vidyardhara couples occurring in the Arjuna's penance relief. The poses of some of the women in the *mithuna* couples as well as in niches showing women only are tantalising yet alluring (Fig. 48). Above the capitals of the pillars is a row of dwarfish *ganas* artistically disposed in different funny postures while the corresponding row in the upper storey is marked by a frieze of geese. In the cell of this ratha is placed a head crowned by *Trisula* very much similar to the one at the southern end of the wagon roof of the Ganesha ratha. Though the horns are lost they can be reconstructed after those of the Ganesa ratha. And such a head was mistaken by earlier writers to represent Siva and therefore the temple must have contained a figure of Siva. This was not true. Long ago when the drift sand was cleared and this *trisula* head was discovered, Longhurst immediately concluded that this was the object of worship in this ratha in the place of a *linga*. He compared this with what we

had observed in the case of the Ganesa ratha and concluded that the worship of the Trident-head was probably a contemporary cult. This is not true. We cannot suppose that what looks like a man's head with horns is that of Siva or much less of any divinity. This should have originally gone on the roof of Bhima ratha and fallen down and hence caught by the drifting sand in which condition Longhurst discovered it.

DRAUPADI RATHA (Fig. 49)

The next temple named after Draupadi (the temples like many monuments all over South India are associated without any historical basis or reason whatsoever with the five Pandavas), is probably the most elegant though simple in this group. Its architecture has already been explained. Supported by four corner pilasters and above the entrance, it has a niche crowned by *makara-torana* on three sides (Fig. 49). On the west it has two niches containing figures of *dvarapalikas*, which flank either side of the doorway decorated with *makara-toranas*. The remaining niches each contain a relief of standing Durga, the one on the east resting on the cut buffalo-head of the demon (Fig. 49). In the cell inside is a relief of four-armed standing Durga adored by two kneeling worshippers one of them brandishing his sword to cut off his own head as an offering to the Goddess while four dwarfish *ganas* hover above (Fig. 50). Alternating elephants and lions are carved at the base of this monument as also in the case of *Arjuna ratha*. Longhurst mistook the devotee as offering his hair to the Goddess according to the practice of hair offering still prevalent in South India. But it is obvious by a comparative study of all the Durga-groups occurring in Mahabalipuram such as the two Varaha caves, that it depicts the practice of self-sacrifice to Durga for which Durga is celebrated even as early as the period of *Sangam* literature. In front of the elegant *ratha* of Durga is a standing lion also celebrated in *Sangam* literature as the mount of Durga (Fig. 51).

As the place Mamallapuram appears to be celebrated for the Durga cult, it will be useful to consider this cult as the *Sangam* works proclaimed it. As *Korravai* and *Verrimadandai* (Goddess of Victory) residing in the *vagai* tree, she is introduced to us by *Kuruntokai* (218) and *Padirrupattu* (66) which emphasise her dwelling in rock areas and her being hailed as *Suli*, the wielder of the Trident, to whom vows are made:-

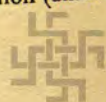
Vidar-mukai-adukkattu-viral kelu Sulikku Kadanum punam (*Kuruntokai* 218).

The *Ahananuru* (345) calls her the great goddess, denizen of the forest *Kadamar-Selvi* and *Kadurai Kadavul*. She is described as dancing the *Tunangai* dance (Thunangaiyan Selvi). The *Manimekalai* VII, 50-53. in the story of Chakravallakottam has a graphic description of *Kadamarselvi* as follows:

"The Great temple of Kadamar-Selvi (Durga or Chandika), the damsel residing in the necropolis (burial-cum-burning ground), with the high sacrificial altar in front, surrounded by tall drooping trees from which hang the heads of those who had sacrificed their lives with unshaken mind and steadfast purpose." The commentator of this verse says that the deity is Durga also called Chandika and that the self-sacrifice referred to was done by tying the hair to the branch of the tree and then severing the head. The practice of head-offering to Durga is elaborated in the *Kalingattupparani* of mediaeval times. Devotees offering their heads to Durga also occur in Chola sculpture (*Pasupati koi*). *Manimekalai* describes *Kadamar-Selvi* as the Goddess of war (comparison with the Greek Goddess of War, Diana is interesting). *Tirumurugarruppadai* calls her *palaiyol* or very ancient Goddess. The *Paripadal* calls her *Kadukal* which is a corruption of *Kadukilai* which in the commentary *Takkayagapparani* is explained as *Kananadi* or Vana-Durga. In the *Devaram* she is noted as *Kadukal*. *Manimekalai* describes the Vindhya-vasini concept of Durga as "*Andaram-selvor andari irunda vinda malvarai mimisaippokar*" (*Manimekalai*-20). *Agama* and *Silpa* (the *Vaikhanasagama*) assign to Durga a place outside the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* a feature that becomes common from the 8th century onwards and this form is of standing Durga often on the head of a buffalo and is described in *Silappadikaram*, a text of great value in our study as it gives a vivid description of the cult and iconography of Durga which is as follows:

Adarttu-elu kurudi adangap-pasum tunip-
Pidart-tolaip-pitam-eriyā madakkodi
Verrivel tadakkai-k-korravai (XX, 34-35)

Korravai is the Tamil name that has led to its Sanskritisation as *Kotavi* or *Kotari*. According to *Silappadikaram* she has a body, dark blue in colour, like the *kaya* flower (*memecylon edule*), lips red like coral, teeth white, neck dark, with a third eye on the crescent-like forehead, holding discus and conch, sword and *sula*, bow which was *nedumalai* (Meru) strung with Vasuki as its bow-string, wearing the tiger's skin and a belt of the lion-skin, a *kalal* (hero's calf-band) on one leg and *silambu* (anklet) on the other, with the hair in a coiffure of *jata* adorned by a serpent and the crescent moon. She is also described as wearing a snake as her breast-band (*kacchu*) carrying a standard of lion (*alikkodi*)



and as covering herself with the elephant's hide as the *uttariya*. She destroyed *asuras*, Mahishasura and Daruka, kicked the *Sakata* and pulled down *Maruda* tree and assumed stiff wooden legs to fight when the *asuras*, assuming the forms of reptiles, crawled under her feet. This last concept gave rise to the special dance pertaining to Durga called '*Mayaval adiya marakkaladal*' (*Silappadikaram*-vii, 59). Like Siva she is said to have swallowed poison and as occupying half the body of the three-eyed Siva as *Mangai* (Uma) (*Sila*. XX. 38). *Silappadikaram* goes further to hail her as Bhadrakali who made Siva dance (*adal kandaruliya anangu*). Thus the total picture that we get from *Silappadikaram* is of a Durga who combines in herself the concepts of Siva, Vishnu and Uma and in her attributes the three *gunas* (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*).

While this description is noticed in the sculptures of Durga in Mahabalipuram (Trimurti Cave, Varaha Caves, Draupadi *ratha* and Mahishamardini Cave) we encounter an interesting detail associated with Durga, the stag in the two Varaha caves, in addition to the lion suggesting clearly that the stag served as Durga's vehicle which is a feature very rare in iconography and peculiar to the Tamil country and found particularly in the sculptures of the Pallava and contemporary Pandya, between the 7th and 10th centuries A.D. These are references to Durga's mount as *pay-kalai payakalaip-pavai*, *kalaippari-urdi*, *kariya terik-kattuk-kalai*, *tiri-tarikottukkalai*. (*Sangam* literature). Sambandar in his *Devaram* refers pointedly to the stag as the mount of Durga. It is gratifying to note that Kavichakravarti Kamban in his description of Ayodhya says, "*Kavalin kalaiyur Kanniyai okkum*", thereby attesting to the persistence of this form even in the 12th century A. D. Her other usual mount, the lion, which also occurs in Pallava sculptures is also mentioned as "*Sengan-ariman Singavidai*." Tamil literature (*Sangam*) describes her by such names as *Amari*, *Kumari*, *Samari*, *Suli*, *Nili*, *Gauri*, *Aiyai*, *Seyyaval*, *Korravai*, *Nallal*, *Kanni* and *Sankari*. Further she is described as *Jnanakkolundu*, *Aykalai* (Goddess of higher knowledge), *Mayaval* (*Silappadikaram* 6th canto, 59th verse)—all pointing to the beginnings of the idea of Devi being *Mayasakti* and *Vidyasakti*. *Silappadikaram* has duly emphasised that she is the younger sister of Vishnu (*Mal*) by saying "*Malavark-kilangilai*", a description that is faithfully followed by the Pallava sculptors of Mahabalipuram whether it is the Trimurti cave, where she takes her place next to Vishnu, or the Varaha cave, where she takes her place next to Trivikrama, or the Mahishamardini cave, where she stands opposite to Anantasayi in the role of dynamic activity in contrast to her brother's relaxation. The famous combination of Anantasayi and Mahishamardini sculptures is an outstanding example whether it is the Mahishamardini cave or the Shore Temple. While it is obvious in the former temple, it has to be searched for carefully in the latter. In the Shore Temple, to the south of the rock-cut Anantasayi figure between the eastern and western Siva shrines, can be noticed this remarkable Durga sculpture in miniature in a niche cut into the chest of a seated lion carving in the round and squatting on a pedestal cut-out of the same rock as the one containing Anantasayi (Fig. 59). The remarkability is not yet over. To its north between it and the reclining Vishnu is Durga's other mount, a recumbent stag in the very characteristic napping pose of the stag species with its head thrown back beside its body. Other parallels for the stag mount of Durga are found in the Singavaram cave temple dedicated to Anantasayi. Similar contemporaneous Mahishamardini scenes and Durga niches in association with Vishnu as Anantasayi are known from Tiruttangal in the Pandya country and Malaiyadiappatti near Pudukkottai. Surely we cannot dismiss them as accidental coincidence. Considered in the light of the evidence from *Silappadikaram*, a text which first mentions the relationship of Vishnu and Durga, the epic is at least contemporaneous with the Mamallapuram sculptures, if not earlier. Another telling evidence also from *Silappadikaram* which records "*aurwarkku-ilaiya-nangai*", i.e., the one that comes after the six indirectly pre-supposes the cult of *Matri-ganas* or the *Saptamatrikas*. Chamunda (*Pidari*) is the sixth and Durga comes after. The *Saptamatrikas* are significantly absent in the monoliths of the Pallavas between A.D. 600-700. They are found for the first time in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi. They are found in the structural temples of the Pallava-Chola transition and in all the early Chola temples upto Rajendra Chola II. In the Chola temples they have a separate shrine on the southern side of the *pradakshina*. The restriction of the list to seven goddesses points to a date after the *Brihatsamhita* (A.D. 500), which is silent about the numbers. Even *Markandeya Purana* is silent on the number. But it is only in early Chalukyan *prasastis* that the number seven is mentioned (*saptamatrikabhivardhanam*). It would therefore appear that the *Saptamatrika*-cult with seven as a fixed number and clear-cut iconography as found in Chalukyan temples moved to Orissa and the Pandya and Pallava countries in the south. This cult faded in the Tamil country after the close of the 11th century. In fact the very last inscription hails from Selliammankoit, Alampakkam and is dated in the 31st R.Y. of Chola Rajadhiraja I (A.D. 1050). Judging from the evidence furnished by Pallava sculpture at Mamallapuram, if the evidence of sculpture is any indication, it would point to a date 7th century or later for the *Silappadikaram* which is the earliest Tamil work to mention the *Saptamatrikas* in association with Durga. The special mention of Durga as "*aurwarkku ilaiya, nangai*," in *Silappadikaram* only echoes that prior to the full advent of the mothers in their quota of seven, Durga was the sole representative. She functioned for all and hence there was no need for several mothers. She was the one *Mata*, the sole *mata* identified with Siva as his half and associated with Vishnu as his half-sister. Jyeshtha, *Tiruk-kethaik-kilatti*, is another Goddess that occurs in late Pallava

sculpture and continues to have her sway all over the Tamil country till the end of the 11th century A.D. She is unknown in Mahabalipuram and her first appearance is in the Kailasanatha temple (8th century A.D.). Thus among the Devis, Durga held a high place. The *Draupadi-ratha* and the Kotikal *mandapam* cave temple are the earliest extant examples (A.D. 640-700) Panamalai (A.D. 700-730) has a shrine for Durga in a gorge (Fig. 19-a) and other instances from Kandiur, and Tirupparankunram are later. It is interesting that the Tiruvalangadu plates mention Vijayalaya erecting a shrine for Durga (Nisumbhasudini) in the capital city of Tanjavur which he founded in about A.D. 850. In the sculpture, Durga is represented seated with one of the two demons Sumbha lying prostrate in front of the pedestal and the other Nisumbha being trampled by the Goddess.

The ubiquitous form of Durga standing over the severed head of a buffalo or a *padmapitha* is special to Mamallapuram as this form as the first of its kind occurs here. In *Draupadi ratha* and the Adivaraha cave a devotee offers his own head by cutting it off at the neck or making a part-offering by cutting his left wrist while another devotee on the other side sits adoring. On top, the gods fly, flanked at the corners by a lion and stag, the two mounts of Durga. In the Adivaraha cave-representation, by the side of Durga is also a *dhvajastambha* with a *sula* on top. We come across this in the Varaha cave, Mamallapuram, at Singavaram, in the lower rock-cut cave, Trichinopoly, and in the temples in Punjai, Pullamangai, Tirupparankunram and near the Anantasayi cave temple at Tiruttangal in the Pandya country. For one, who reads the descriptions of head offerings to Durga and her worship by warriors (*Mallar* or *Eyinar* or *Maravar*) as price for victory vouchsafed by the Goddess in the *Silappadikaram* (XX), these would strike as correct translations in stone of the poetic descriptions. This vow was taken by the warrior class desirous of victory. Like *Silappadikaram*, *Kalingattupparani*, *Dasakumaracharita* and the *Kalika Purana* also describe such head-offerings. The last *purana* also describes the rituals connected with such sacrifices. Putting the evidence of all these we may say that among the sculptured panels from Mamallapuram those depicting the cutting of the left wrist (Adivaraha Cave) by the devotee represents the first stage of the *Navakhandam* offering, and those depicting decapitation, as we notice in the Mallam inscription and sculpture of Kampavarman (A.D. 968), where a decapitated man holds a sword in his right hand and his own cut head by its lock in his left, the final phase of the act called *Matavam* or highest penance in the inscription. We are struck with the *Silappadikaram* concept of Durga which is remarkably more Saivite while her Vaishnavite attributes are the conch and discus and her complexion is also blue like that of her brother *Mayon* (Vishnu), for which reason she is called *Nili*. After saying this the *Silappadikaram* comes back to her common features with Siva such as having *jata* secured by the serpent and adorned by the crescent-moon, the serpent again as her ornament, wearing the tiger-skin ornament, possessing a *nilakantha* blackened as a result of swallowing the *halahala* from the effects of which she was immune and continued to be Gauri (white), and, last but not least, her sharing her body with Trilochana Siva. In view of the importance of this statement it is quoted here:

50. *Draudi Ratha or Durga Ratha. A Mallaiyar devotee offering his head to Durga (Uyirkadan). Mamalla style.*

“Kannudapaka-maludaiyal”
“Kannudaton pakattu mangai.”

(*Silap* 22)

51. *Lion mount of Durga in front of Draupadi Ratha. Mamalla style.*

52. *Nakula Sahadeva Ratha. Dvityasa or Apsedal Dvitala vimana of elliptical shape (vrittayata) resembling the gaja prishtha or elephant back, but truncated at one end, to be classed under Vesara. Mamalla style.*

She is significantly called Sankari, Gauri and Kanni, all of which suggest the *sakti* concept with the *Ardhanari* idea combined in addition to her equation with Vishnu as Siva's half. We are heartened to note that Appar praises this *Sakti* concept in *Devaram* as Paeyalvar also refers to the Harihara concept (*Pasuram* 2344). The equation of Harihara with *Ardhanari* finds a development in the Lalita-cult, a special feature of the south. This would also reflect the Siva-Sakti concept where the *Sakti*, if feminine is Durga and if masculine Vishnu. Thus the equation will be

Siva > Vishnu > Harihara > Durga > *Ardhanari*.

53. *Nakula Sahadeva Ratha. Dvitala vimana of the Vesara style being elliptical (vrittayata) with its back resembling the back of the adjoining elephant carved as if for that purpose (hasthipriththa). Mamalla style.*

The earliest *Ardhanari* in sculpture is Pallava, found in the *Dharmaraja ratha* (Fig. 35c), where the Parvati-half has two hands like the Siva-half. Yet another *Ardhanari* from Mamallapura is in the Madras Museum. In the early Chola temples from Aditya I (A.D. 871-907) onwards, *Ardhanari* takes the place of Vishnu sculpture in the niche on the hind wall of the *garbha-griha* (e.g. Kandiur temple, Nagesvara temple, Kumbakonam, Muvarkovil, Kodumbalur) and though this gave place to *Lingodbhava* in many instances it persisted till about the 13th century A.D., for, in *Narttamalai* we find an *Ardhanari* in the back wall of the sanctum built in A.D. 1205 and also in the Great Temples of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram. The earliest Harihara-forms are found in the *Dharmaraja ratha* and Adivaraha cave temple, in the cave temple at Kunnakkudi, in the *Muvarakoil* and in the temples of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram. Sometimes the place of Vishnu on the back wall of the *garbha-griha* is taken by Harihara. The worship of *Saptamatikas*, *Jyeshtha*, etc. continued till about the close of the 11th century A.D., even after the influence of the *bhakti* movement of the Nayanmars and Alvars. The reformation brought about in the worship of *Sakti* by Sankaracharya in the first half of the 9th century A.D., is too well known to be recorded. Durga



50



51



52



53

105



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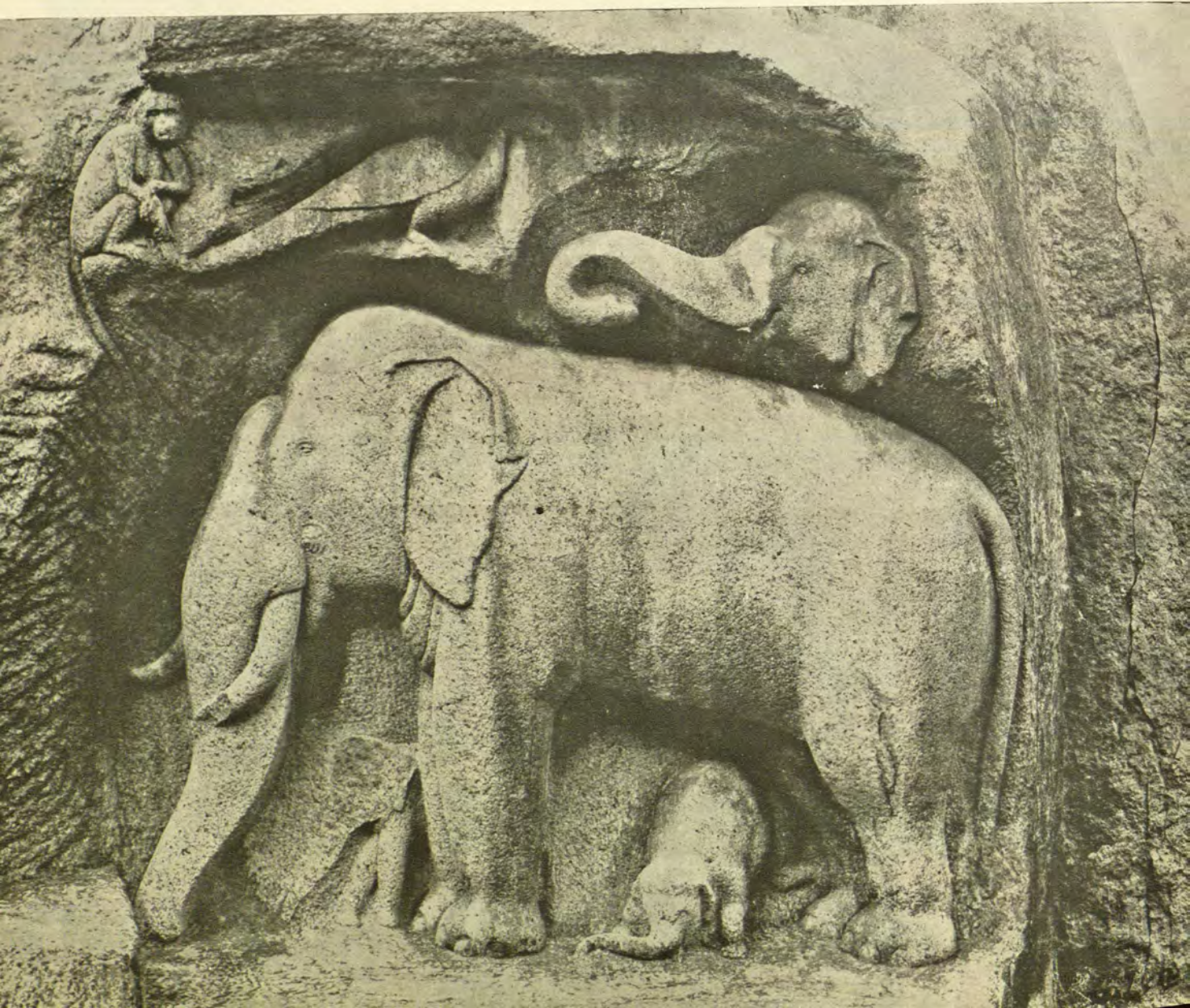


54



55

55a



shrines referred to as *munril* in *Silappadikaram* are called *Tirumurram* or *Satti-murram* in Chola times as distinguished from *Sri Koyil* of Siva and Vishnu. It was only in the second quarter of the 11th century A.D. that Amman shrines, *Kamakkottam* as they are called, were built from the time of Rajendra Chola I (A.D. 1012-44) which henceforth constituted the characteristic features of the Tamilian temples. They were added to the pre-existing temples as for instance the Great Temples of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram. The cult of Durga being thus very important, the *Draupadi ratha* which should strictly be called a Durga temple has enshrined this Goddess. This *ratha* is the most elegant in the group by virtue of its tiny hut-like simple shape.

MALLAIYAR AND MAMALLAPURAM

It was remarked that *Mallars* or *Maravar* or *Eynar* were warriors who executed vows of head offering to Durga when they desired victory for their king in battles or even in cattle raids and hunts. For one who reads descriptions of head-offering to Durga by these warrior *Mallars* as price for the victory vouchsafed by the Goddess in the *Silappadikaram* the sculptures of Mahabalipuram would strike an exact representation of the poetic description. Durga is said to have gone in front of these warriors assuring protection and victory. The Mamallapuram example would also confirm the contemporaneity or at least inspiration of the literary versions supplied by *Manimekalai* and *Silappadikaram* with the earlier sculptural depictions. It is against this literary and folk background supplied by Sangam works and hymns of Alwars and Nayanmars that the temple-city of Mamallapuram arose and exists. Mallapuram is the city of the Durga-vow-taking *Mallar-warriors* whose *ishta-devata* was Durga, sister of Vishnu, consort of Siva and mother of Skanda. A visible representation of this cult-story is the spirit of the *rathas* of Mamallapuram. Narasimhavarmam I, the architect of a large part of the temple-complex of Mamallapuram deserves the title *Mamalla* (*Mahamalla*), the chief of the *Malla* warriors.

NAKULA-SAHADEVA RATHA (Fig. 52)

This stands apart from the row of the four *rathas* described already and is named after the twin Pandava heroes Nakula and Sahadeva with whom it has nothing to do. It has a peculiar shape of a horse-shoe at the back and is an apsidal one (Fig. 53), with ornamental features as in the other *rathas*. The front of the roof is wagon-shaped like the *Ganesha* and *Bhima* *raths* which led writers to describe it as an accurate little model of a Buddhist *chaitya*. The carving of an elephant by its side (Fig. 54) is so done as to enable it to stand in front of Arjuna *ratha* and on alignment with the lion carving which as we have already stated is in front of *Draupadi ratha*. The lion being the mount of Durga it was easy for us to settle the *Draupadi ratha* as originally meant to enshrine Durga. On the same analogy the carving of the impressive elephant by the side of *Nakula-Sahadeva ratha*, but significantly in front of and between Arjuna *ratha* and *Nakula-Sahadeva ratha*, indicates which way the wind blows. Such an orientation would only mean that the elephant stands as the right mount of the God enshrined or meant to go into the Arjuna *ratha*. And such a god is actually depicted on the back wall of the Arjuna *ratha* as utilising the elephant mount and riding on it and we have already described this God as *Muruga* or *Subrahmanya* on the authority of *Sangam* literature (*Puram* and *Padirruppattu*) reading as:

Pinimuka uridi-on seyyonum ena (*Puram*)
Kaliru urndangu (*Padirruppattu*).

Its location, however, by the side of *Nakula-Sahadeva ratha* is also to suggest the plan of *Gajaprishtakara*, the form of the elephant-back to the *Sahadeva ratha* (Fig. 58). Writers have opined that probably the *Sahadeva ratha* was intended for Skanda or in the alternative for Indra, both relying on the elephant mount. As Indra has no place in this temple-scheme, Skanda has already been disposed of as the likely god going into the Arjuna *ratha* which is his by the right of contiguity to his mother's (*Durga* temple). If so, who was to go into the *Sahadeva ratha*? An examination of the *Somaskanda* panel in the *Mahishamardini* cave (Fig. 22) which is the citadel as it were of Durga will reveal the happy family in a row consisting of Devi, Skanda, Siva, Brahma and Vishnu, while in front of the pedestal is shown Chandesa seated awaiting Siva's reward. If, with this plan in our mind, we study the *rathas*, we will find that the *rathas* are only the respective shrines of these gods and goddesses. First comes *Draupadi ratha*, for Devi Durga, the Mother. Next comes Arjuna *ratha* for Skanda who is Devi's son. Next comes *Bhima-ratha* which by its oblong size takes Vishnu-Anantasayi and last in this row is the fourth *ratha*, *Dharmaraja ratha*, which with its three layers takes in Siva who is the greatest God in this group or family. Arjuna *ratha* which takes in Skanda in his capacity as Brahma-Sasta has accounted for Brahma also. That *Dharmaraja ratha* is clearly for the Great God Siva whose family consists of Devi as Durga and Skanda as Brahma-Sasta is proven by the largest number of sculptures, as many as forty-two, singing the glory of Siva and his *lilas* among which the most significant for our study of the special cult of Mamallapuram are *Harihara*, *Ardhanarisvara*, *Siva* and *Vishnu*. The attempt by earlier writers to assign this *ratha* for Brahma may, we may admit, stands a chance by elimination. But

54. *Elephant between Arjuna Ratha and Nakula Sahadeva Ratha. As vahana of Skanda as Sangam literature proclaims. Mamalla style.*

55. *Ganesha Ratha. Oblong (ayatasra) dvitala vimana of sala type with wagon top roof (salasikhara) with nine vase-shaped finials. This is the precursor of the later temple gopurams of South India. Mamalla style.*

55a *Elephant group beyond Ganesha Ratha. Trial or experiment of a detail from famous Arjuna penance relief.*

as we have already accounted for Brahma in the Brahma-Sasta concept of Skanda whom we have located in Arjuna ratha and also because the Dharmaraja ratha is of much larger size, in fact it is the largest, its ownership cannot go to Brahma whose role is secondary and whose importance is far less when compared to that of Siva, the Somaskanda, Ardhanaari and Harihara that He was. In short, by its gigantic and relatively bigger size it goes by a right to the owner of the family, Somaskanda. As though anticipating such a problem of its beholders, *Aiyantakama* Pallava, the name by which the Pallava has inscribed himself in the Dharmaraja ratha, was thoughtful enough to put up in a separate cell in this ratha, a Somaskanda relief. Perhaps the problem of its ownership was not anticipated by Mamalla Narasimhavarman I who started the ratha. It perhaps arose in *Aiyantakama* Pallava's time. Hence there are two periods of structural activities in this ratha as borne by its inscriptions. Though this has answered the question of the celestial owners of the four rathas in a row, the ownership of Sahadeva ratha awaits answer. The theory of Indra advocated by some writers has nothing to be said in its favour. Also there are no figure-carvings on the Sahadeva ratha to help. But the occurrence of Chandesa in the Somaskanda panel of Mahishamardini cave clearly suggests the inclusion of Chandesa in the family of Siva as Somaskanda. In the relief, besides the usual Siva, Uma and Skanda with Vishnu and Brahma in the background, also occur Nandi and Chandesa kneeling while Siva holds what appears to be a garland, with which, as the story records, he decorated Chandesa. From the period of Pallava-Chola transition (A.D. 850 onwards), the *ashtaparivara* of a Siva temple includes the shrine of Chandesa following the impetus of the *Devaram* hymnists. The Saivite quartet have profuse references to Chandesa in their hymns. It was not till we come to Rajaraja Chola I the great (A.D. 985-1014) that we find a separate shrine for Chandesa to the north-west of the main *vimana* in Tanjore. Thereafter it has become a regular feature in the plan of all Siva temples till today in South India. The Gangaikondacholapuram temple by Rajendra Chola I (A.D. 1012-44) contains a masterpiece rendering into stone of this godling whose role is that of custodian or guardian of Siva's family. Chandesa has come to enjoy a unique preference among the earlier devotees prior to the *Devaram* hymnists. In fact, he occupies a middle place between Siva and the Nayanmars. If Chandesa occupies a position equal to that of the *ashta parivara* deities of the pantheon of the Pallava-Chola transition it is because of the recognition of his divinity and greatness by the Nayanmars themselves. Hitherto earlier writers were despondent that there is only a mere sculpture in Mamallapuram depicting the remarkable story of Chandesa. There is no need for such despondency if we remember that the Sahadeva ratha, by its location to the north-west of the Dharmaraja-ratha in an alignment different from the main row of the rathas, bids well to enshrine Chandesa. The same is the arrangement effected by Rajaraja in the Great Temple at Tanjore. From the angle and the removed location of the shrine, and the shrine itself facing south, it can be argued that it was easy for Chandesa to guard the property of Somaskanda. If the single row of four rathas constitute Somaskanda's residential property, housing his family members, the separate Sahadeva ratha-shrine can be construed as an out-house or a guard-house for the custodian to watch such property and stay near the master's home property.

The orientation of the elephant for Skanda and the lion for Durga has been already noticed. There is however the carving of a handsome bull (Fig. 49), whose orientation behind Draupadi ratha is a puzzle. As Draupadi ratha, Arjuna ratha, and Bhima ratha are meant for the members of Siva's family, Siva in the present case being Somaskanda, who is enshrined in the biggest Dharmaraja ratha here, the bull-mount clearly meant for the God of Dharmaraja ratha is located far away and the interspace has been occupied by the Arjuna and Bhima rathas. This scrupulous distance can be appreciated, when we remember that the work here is on one rock while in a structural temple, such as the Great temple by Rajaraja I, this distance and orientation of Nandi is also observed. Surely Rajaraja I was inspired by the plan and orientation of the Mamallapuram rathas in his master achievement, Raja-rajeshvaram. Even to the minutest detail such as Chandesa's separate watch-house Rajaraja has given consideration.

GANESHA RATHA (Fig. 55)

Beyond Arjuna's penance a path leads to the Ganesha ratha, one of the finest monolithic temples here. It resembles the Bhima ratha but is of better workmanship and three storeyed. The gable-ends of the wagon-shaped roof have a finial showing a human head decorated by a trident-shaped head-gear. This motif is repeated in the finials of the decorative gables along the wagon roof. The usual pavilion on pillars with squatting lion bases and *kudu* ornamentation occur. Though the temple is intended for Siva, its place is now occupied by a later Ganesha. It is interesting to note that there is no sculpture of Ganesha here. This god is singularly absent as a contemporary sculpture in early Pallava cave temples and rathas till the time of Rajasimha (A.D. 700). In the Ramanuja mandapa cave-temple is an interesting frieze of *bhutas* over the beam of the facade. Of twenty-one *Bhuta-ganas* in the frieze, the central one is a *kumbhodara*. While twelve on either side of him carry on their shoulders two garlands, the two extreme *bhutas* support the *kapota*. Of these, the seventh *gana* from the south has the head of an elephant over a human body suggesting that he was only one among

anthropomorphic *ganas* or *bhutas* comprising such friezes, and by no means a god of importance with a special place in the pantheon. The same is again found as an ornament of the *kudu* arches in the Shore Temple and never even in a niche or *devakoshta* or any on their walls. Thus while Ganesha is absent as a god the name Ganesha-ratha is a misnomer. The cell once contained a Siva linga but it is now occupied by a figure of Ganesha put up by the villagers fifty years ago. An inscription in this *ratha* records that it is the *Atyantakama Pallavesvara griham*. *Atyantakama* was a title of Paramesvaravarman I. This temple with its wagon roofed tower and elaborately worked roof with nine vase-shaped finials is the precursor of the later oblong *gopurams* or gateways, which are today inspiring never-to-be-forgotten landmarks of mediaeval South Indian temples, breaking the monotony of the horizon and the sky-scape all over south India.

ELEPHANT GROUP

A little beyond Ganesha Ratha and behind the Trimurti cave is a rock-carving of an attractive group of an elephant family (a tusker with its cow and two calves), a she-monkey and a peacock—all realistically carved and suggesting a forest scene. The elephants remind us of the elephant-pair in Arjuna's penance relief, with which they are stylistically allied. This high-class carving was perhaps an experimental model for the exquisite ones in the famous Arjuna's penance relief (Fig. 55-A).

STRUCTURAL TEMPLES

While Mahendra I in his Mandagappattu inscription refers to monolithic cave architecture, he indicates in an implied manner that the practice was also to bring into use stone pillars of local hard-stones in structural *mandapas* attached to brick and timber shrines. Such *mandapas* built of brick, had stone pillars inside covered by stone slabs overlaid with brick and mortar terrace. The technique of stripping granite or gneiss slabs from rock surfaces was known from the megalithic times as they were used in the construction of dolmens and cists. Such *mandapas* with slab-roofing or timber beams and tiled roofing are common in Kanara and Malabar, which practice was perhaps after similar *mandapas* with the Palnad pillars of lime stone were raised by the Ikshvaku kings at Nagarjunakonda. A few pillars with cubical base and top and octagonal belt, one with embossed lotus medallions and another with the *birudas* of Mahendra Varman inscribed found incorporated in a ruined *mandapa* called *Purana-mandapa* in the Ekamranatha temple at Kanchi support this view. This *Purana-mandapa* has since been pulled down and some of the pillars are now removed to the Madras Museum. As *mandapa*-pillars they could not have formed part of a shrine or *vimana*. Similar *mandapa* pillars with inscriptions of Mamalla are known from Sivanvayal and Kuram. Also similar pillars of hard stone are noticed in the *mandapa* of the Kailasanatha temple built by Rajasimha at Kanchi. In fact the inscription of Chalukya Vikramaditya speaking of his invasion of Kanchi is found on one of the pillars, and here, since in all the columns, some of which are of granite and others of sandstone, the capitals are moulded out of sandstone, it will appear that the Pallava masons could not quarry large blocks of granite or gneiss and make complicated curved mouldings in the round out of a hard material. At the most they could cut bevells and shallow reliefs showing lotus medallions in blocks of hard stone shaped out of free standing pillar-like natural rocks abundantly found, while they could also show all the mouldings in their cave temples and *rathas* on rock walls. Even sandstone pillars have a uniform four-sided section throughout and pilasters have rearing lions carved in their front adding to their mass. It is only in later Pallava times that pillars complete with capitals and sometimes with lion-bases are found to have been made for the *mandapas*. Attempts to construct structural *vimanas* with stone appear to have been made from the time of Paramesvaravarman I (A.D. 672-700). Rajasimha (A.D. 700-728) reverted to the soft stones such as sandstone in his constructions. It is this coarse variety of sandstone that was quarried in blocks and brought to the site of works where they were cut, carved and moulded for the construction of temples such as Kailasanatha and other temples of Rajasimha, the Shore Temple, Olakkannesvara temple at Mahabalipuram and similar temples of Rajasimha's successors. The desire for the incorporation of the new material, granite, is noticeable. Granite is found used in the lower-most moulding and the top-most moulding of the *adhithana* where the slabs could be laid flat as a bedding for the *upana* and as the flooring of the shrine. Rajasimha and Mahendra Varman III (A.D. 700-728) used such slabs in the Kailasanatha temple for these two courses, the rest being of sandstone. So also did Nandivarman Pallava Malla (A.D. 732-796) in the Vaikunthaperumal temple at Kanchi. It is on the faces of such granite slabs that inscriptions are engraved in preference to the sandstone faces where they tend to wither away sooner. Though the soft stones are susceptible to fine, perfect carving, it was soon found necessary to protect them from wind and weather by thin plaster further embellished by painting. In the temples built of soft stones individual sculptures were made as composite carvings extending over the faces of more than one stone. The fitting of stones which had the carvings in the courses had to be very close and accurate to ensure continuity of sculptures. The resultant bas-reliefs were shallow or flat and their features had to be heightened by plaster and paint. As already observed the blocks to carry bas-reliefs were built into position with their lateral, top and bottom faces trimmed neat and slumb to enable fitting like ashlar work while their outer faces were left unfinished for the appropriate parts of the sculpture to be carved on the spot. Against such a background has to be studied the Shore Temple.

THE TEMPLES AND SCULPTURES UNDER RAJASIMHA

Like all monarchs in Bharat, whether they were in Aryavarta in the north, or in the Dravida country in the south, the sense of glory was importantly ensured by propagating the ancient lineage. The sun and the moon were claimed as the first ancestors. And if they could push back the descent to a geneology near enough to the heroes of the *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana*, the greatness of the dynasty could be more easily fixed in the consciousness of the people, with their memories of the heroic deeds of the princes of the past. The poet Kalidasa himself had succumbed to this romanticism by launching on the epic poem, *Raghuvamsa*, in which he had eulogised the deeds of the heroic line of Raghu, of whom Rama, the God king, was one of the most illustrious. Perhaps he had wanted to laud the deeds of his patron, the Gupta Emperor, of whom he was one gem among nine.

The Pallavas were no exception to the rule. Indeed, they advertised an ancestry far beyond Tondamandalam, variously to the Bactrians, the Scythians and other heroes, who had emigrated to Kanchi.

Narsimhavarman Mahamalla had the portrait of his grandfather and two grandmothers embossed in Mahabalipuram as also of his father and his two mothers. And he spoke of his father Mahendravarman, always as *Vichitrachitta* and named his son, Mahendravarman II.

Mahendravarman II reigned for a brief period of two years from c. 668 to 670 A.D.

After Mahendravarman II came his son, Parameshwaravarman I, who ruled for twentyfive years, from c. 670 to c. 695.

The re-emergence of the Chalukya power in the north, under Vikramaditya I (A.D. 655-681), who was probably one of the younger sons of Pulakesin II, meant constant vigil for the Pallavas. Because the new Chalukya King tried to revive the suzerainty of the formidable Pulakesin II, and began to aggress against all and sundry.

The Gadval plate of A.D. 674 mentions that Vikramaditya I, Chalukya, captured Kanchi and destroyed the family of Mahamalla. The Pallava records contend that Parameshwaravarman I contained the attack of Vikramaditya Chalukya and obliged him to flee ('covered only by a rag') from the battle that took place at Peruvannallur Lalgudi near Trichinopoly.

The conflicting reports show that, for a whole generation, the Pallavas were threatened by the Chalukyas.

There was thus not much time for Parameshwaravarman I, to give to cultural pursuits.

He, however, revived Mahendravarman first's dedication to Shiva and built a structural temple at Kuram near Kanchi, in honour of that God. He also maintained the monuments at Mahabalipuram and added a few.

The heritage left by Parameshwaravarman I was to be reinforced, through major initiatives, by his son Narasimhavarman II, Rajasimha, who enjoyed a comparatively peaceful reign from c. 695 to c. 722.

Rajasimha assumed 250 titles, which show not only his vanity but also his qualities.

Among these honorific definitions, Rajasimha, 'Lion among Kings' was the first, 'Shankara Bhakta' or devotee of Shiva, and 'Agamatriya' or the lover of scriptures were the others, indicating his *gunas*.

It is known that he was a man of taste and retained Dandin, the Sanskrit romancier, who adapted Bhasa's plays and performed them in Kanchi before the king.

Rajasimha sent an Embassy to China, conserved his kingdom as a model state, and built firmly on orthodox principles.

His greatest achievements in architecture was the extension of certain rock-out shrines at Mahabalipuram and the construction of the famous shore temple, washed by the waves of the sea.

Rajasimha seems to have accepted a kind of pantheistic philosophy of which ritual was the outward formal declaration. There is no doubt that he inclined towards Shiva and sought to trace the vitality of his predecessors from the phallic power. But the sculptured figures in the various constructions during his reign evidence to a frank acceptance of the Shiva-Shakti principles, which itself was an extension of the popular Purusha-Prakriti idea.

Purusha is supposed to be inactive. Prakriti becomes dynamic in contact with the Purusha, who lies inert. Prakriti is the female, whose nature is to woo the male by various blandishments. The mystery of the coming together of the Purusha and Prakriti is not explained. Also, it is paradoxical that Purusha, who is conscious, is inactive and Prakriti, who is active, is unconscious. The worshipper can, however, realise himself by meditating on this mystery.

The worshipper has a soul. Whether the soul is permanently real or unreal can only be known through Yoga. But there must be someone to perform sacrifices and offer *shraddha* to dead ancestors, someone to whom the rites can be taught. Someone who can practice these rites, if the soul resides in the individual. This soul must be saved. When it is liberated from bondage it achieves salvation and blessedness. Whether it enters another individual after liberation is not certain, but the individual soul can act and enjoy the fruits of action in the workaday world. This world exists because we experience it. Only it is an illusion of an illusion, created by Brahma, who forms the stuff of the various illusions, that which remains Real. The individual soul can only discover the relations between word and meaning, reality and unreality, but cannot understand the uncreated essence, which it can however, realise through Yoga. Action or *Karma* brings fruits, in reward and punishment. The hierarchy of the world is maintained by the three essences and qualities. Sattvas, Rajas and Tamas, the three strings which are to compose the harmony of the soul.

Rajasimha believed in this systematic philosophy and was a devout worshipper.

The finest experience of his faith is the grand Shore Temple, whose carving occupied the best part of his reign.

The sculptures executed in his time are not poised in the heroic dimensions of the work carried out in the time of Mahendravarman I or Mahamalla. His father, Parameshvaravarman I (c. 670-695) had spent most of his time in rescuing the Pallava kingdom from the attack of Vikramaditya I, Chalukya Rajasimha's grandfather. Mahendravarman II had only ruled for two years from c. 668 to c. 670. The heritage of the great grandfather Narasimhavarman Mahamalla had to be rehabilitated and the tradition of Mahendravarman I, emulated.

Rajasimha tried to cope with the responsibilities and gave expression to his varied tastes which he had inherited from his ancestors.

But like his ancestors, Rajasimha orders any boulders that are left uncarved to be hewn into the shape of a temple. He is aware of the responsibility to the Gods as an orthodox king.

The formalism of the art of sculpture in his time, therefore, sustains the outer facade of respectability, without making any fresh contribution to the plastic situation, though the Shore Temple is an achievement on the highest scale and worth of the great Pallavas.

M.R.A.



The boulders of stone and the rocks which were carved into shrines called Rathas, under Mahamalla, are object lessons in the use of materials. The evolution of design, to suit the shape of the available rocks, for big or large-sized architecture-sculptures.

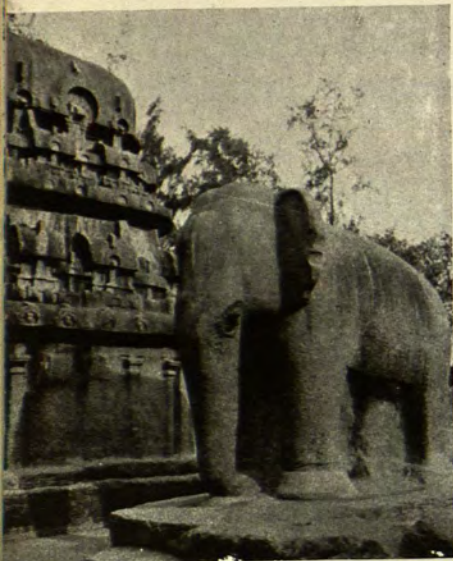
The skill of the master craftsmen is here addressed to new challenges for which the prototypes did exist at Aihole and Chezarla but Mahamalla obviously asked for the development of something original and new. The previous elements have, therefore, been absorbed. And from the crude hulks of the rocks and the weight, have been created fantasies of movement—Ratha shrines or chariot temples each imbued with the dignity, grace and elegance of a house fit for the Gods.



c



e



b

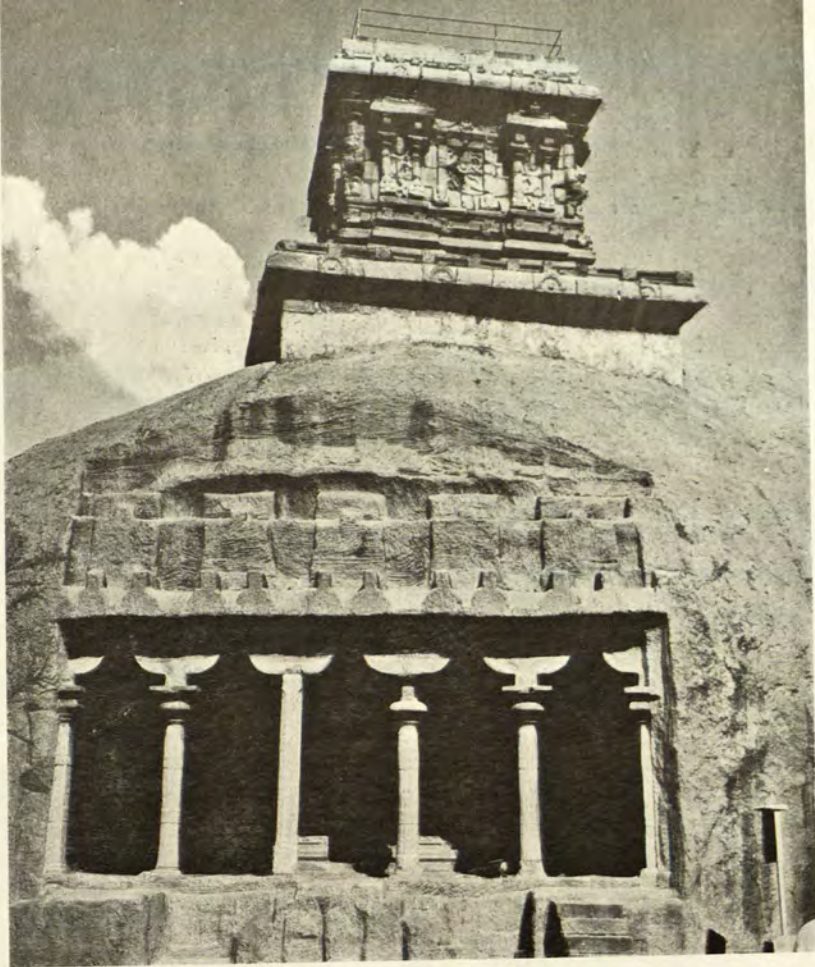


d

a. The unfinished boulders reproduced here show the slow emergence of forms. The sustained and intense preoccupations with the sheer task of carving become clear when we see a finished temple nearby. The devotion of years of hard toil, the concentrated vision of emergence of forms and the obsession with energy, was necessary to realise masses perforated, dented and chiselled into preconceived shapes of unsurpassed clarity, precision and depth. The condensation of latent power released by the hand of men can be seen in the unfinished work of nature on the half-carved temple and the transformation by man of raw materials into perfection.

b. And where the boulder was not large enough for a shrine, there the hulk was carved into a sacred animal. The treatment of form here is heightened by resort to characterisation. The rounder rock yields to the rotundities and carved lines of the elephants, lovingly smoothened out to radiate the nobility, the grace and the might of the sacred beast.

c. The plastic situation offered by a low boulder could be already visualised as Nandi, the Vahan of Shiva. This one is obviously unfinished. The carving shows the cubist treatment with which the sculptors began.



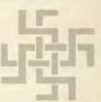


d. Similarly, the other heavy boulder, not big enough for a temple or elephant, nor squat enough for a Nandi bull, is scooped out in the heroic posture of a lion, the symbol of power. The flowing line, of which the Indian sculptor was a master, the expressionism with which his soul was charged, the formal understanding by which the concrete could be made universal in his hand, are integrated here into the very symbol of kingly power. The shape of the lion is transformed by the inner experience of the carver sense of power into an outward meditative principle.

e. The rich imagination which could transcreate brute matter into spiritual realities, on various levels, conceives god as a most highly evolved man.

f. The Shiva image in the Dharmaraja's Ratha with its finely chiselled face, broad shoulders and narrow waist, puts the formal Shiva of the great rock into the shade. Humanism is now an experience; men can become gods, and gods can become men. The subtleties of the carving, the skilled execution of inclines and declines, and the chaste simplicity achieve here one of the finished masterpieces of Indian plastic art.

g. Above the Mahishamardini cave temple, scooped out under Mahamalla, were some boulders out of which Rajasimha had constructed a shrine, which he named Olakkannesvara temple. This square structure carries on the musical repetition of planes and sculptures in the Mahamalla style. The originality consists in placing the





shrine on top of the hill where the king may have wished to retire for prayers 'far from the madding crowds'. The sculptures, now weather-beaten, indicate an obsession with power more than rhythms in the Dakshinamurti.

h. Another innovation, under Rajasimha, is the rather baroque Pravachanamandapa, sometimes called Yali Mandapa or Sangeeta Mandapa. Indeed, it is like a permanent stage set with eleven huge demoniac lion heads, the two outrushing lions, and the dwarapala, with a rectangular chamber in the middle. The flanking elephant heads, with two horse-shoe fronted chambers are an experimental study in fantasies of power which did not come off. If it was meant for a stage it was too small. If it was meant for a shrine, it was too bizarre. The possibilities of this solid rock were, however, unconsciously exploited for portraying the mass, weight and volume of Rajasimha's established power for a populace which would be impressed by the lion shapes into obedience, work and worship.

i. Undoubtedly the most significant innovation under Rajasimha, was the Shore Temple.

There is a revival of the heroism of his ancestors here.

The boulders on the seashore were removed, shaped and constructed, to confront the voyagers with the vision of a five-storey sikhara which defines itself, on a graduated plane, into the heart of the sky. The style of South Indian temple architecture, which was later on to become the rich gopuram is still chaste, musical in composition. Absorbing the lessons of Aihole and farther north, it achieves a freshness which startles the awareness. The beauty of this structure is in its studied attempt at verticality.

The prodigious energy of the South Indian carvers expanded itself, under one of the last great Pallavas, as on many boulders around, which could be carved into lions, Nandis and other animal figures.

The vision of the Shore Temple from the sea, at dawn or dusk, is one of the most memorable in world art.

j. Rajasimha's obsession with himself as a lion here assumes another shape from his unconscious, almost a joke played by the artist on the king.

k,l. The fact that the sculptor's art had not lost its love of linear rhythm and gracious curved contours is evidenced in these two figures, one of a worshipper with a flower basket, and another of a mendicant singing with the Ektari. The devotion of the first is as serene as the ecstasy of the second.

m. The rock-cut carving of Durga near Talagiri Svara temple Paramallai, done in Rajasimha's time, is a study in lyrical grace, release of power and exaltation through the dramatic grouping of figures. The tradition of carving was now inherent.



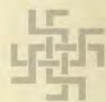
SHORE TEMPLE (Fig. 56)

The Shore temple, which is a complex of three shrines with accessory *mandapas* and enclosures is in part an early attempt of Rajasimha in building a large temple-complex. Of the three shrines the largest facing east towards the sea is a complete *vimana* called in the inscriptions *Kshatriya-simhesvara*. *Kshatriyasimha* was a title of Rajasimha. It was dedicated to Siva. The smaller *vimana* called *Rajasimhesvara* also dedicated to Siva is however facing west. In between the two, is a shrine without any superstructure of a rock-cut reclining Vishnu (*Seshasayana*). The living rock that contains the sculpture constitutes also the moulded basement of the two contiguous shrines, namely, western Siva shrine and *Seshasayana* shrine, showing that they were coeval. The larger *vimana* facing east was a subsequent addition in front. The Vishnu shrine is a truncated oblong *vimana* with a *mukha mandapa* in front. The western Siva temple is a square *tritala-vimana*. The eastern *vimana* stands at a slightly higher level and is a square *chatushtala-vimana* which is made to look like a five-storeyed structure by a close *prakara-wall* of lesser height than the first storey, surrounding the sanctum and carrying on the top a row (*hara*) of *kutas* and *salas*. These two *vimanas* derive their apparent height and slenderness by the absence of a *hara* in the first and the fourth storey of the larger *vimana* and in the top storey of the smaller *vimana* and the relatively greater heights of the *harmyas*. In both these *vimanas* granite slabs are used for *upana* and *pattika*. The *stupi* is, however, of polished black stone and is octagonal like the *sikhara* below. Both the *vimanas* are therefore of the *Dravida* order. The pillars with rampant lions are common. There are also pillars showing in place of the lions or *vyalas*, elephants, *bhutas*, *nagas*, rams, etc. Both the shrines contain Somaskanda panels inside and *Dharalingas* of black polished stone.

Though there are a number of sculptures adorning the *mandapas* and *mandapa-pillars* scattered about, noteworthy among them are those relating to Arjuna's penance already described, Kinnara and Gandharva couples hovering and worshipping (Figs. 57 a, b, c) a forcible study of Dakshinamurti seated in *virasana*, Vinadhara Dakshinamurti and Siva seated as Kiratarjunamurti. Kiratarjunamurti is a fascinating iconographic study just in the spirit of the famous relief of Arjuna's penance. We saw *Pasupatastra* there, in the big relief, as a Gana holding the trident and with a terrific dwarfish body (*tanum bhimam bibhrat-Bharavi*). But here he is shown as being held by Siva in his lower right hand in the shape of a four-armed demigod superposed on the shaft of the trident. This and the anthropomorphic form in the bigger Arjuna's-penance-relief give us a clear and vivid picture of *astras* and *astra-devatas* mentioned in our Puranas. Mention may also be made of the icon of Tripurantaka found on one of the panels here, where Tripurantaka using Vishnu as an arrow is interesting (Fig. 58), his other hands holding trident, bow, and mace.

To the south of the *vimana* is a boulder which has been fashioned into Durga's mount, viz, a squatting lion, the torso of which has been socketed and a sculpture of Durga as Mahishamardini worked on its sunken hind wall (Fig. 59). In addition, just to its north is a recumbent stag, Durga's other mount, in the characteristic slumbering pose of the caprines, with its head thrown back beside its body. On the outer walls are a few Chola inscriptions in Tamil referring to *Jalasayana alias Kshatriya-simha-Pallavesvara*, *Pallikondaruliya-deva* and *Rajasimha-Pallavesvara*. In the courtyard was found a damaged inscription on the side of a *balipitha* opposite the shrine facing west consisting of six Sanskrit verses praising the qualities of head and heart, beauty, valour and piety of Rajasimha. One of the verses is identical with the last verse of the Kailasanatha temple inscription. The whole compound of the Shore Temple was buried under sand till a few years back. This has been cleared but the contiguity of the sea is a perpetual menace to the safety of the temple as the salt-laden winds from the sea are eating into the stone fabric causing erosion of sculpture. The temple has been protected since 1944-45 from the direct beating of the sea waves by the erection of a groyne-wall.

In conclusion, we are happy to note that life under the Pallava kings as the monuments of the temple city of Mamallapuram reveal, emphasised high thinking (culturally speaking) and plain and pure living. High thinking was obtained by combining music with art and social experience. Social experience transcended human limitations and included celestial music as played by *kinnaras*, *vidyadharas*, *siddhas*, *sadhyas* and *demigods*. Pure and plain living is limelighted by the *rathas*, reliefs and cave temples by distributing humanity in the citadels of the various godly-cults. Purity is reflected in the head-offering and other ritualistic experiences of the Mallaiyar people, who by running a godly race have lent their illustrious name to this important Pallava seaport—Mamallapuram.





56. Shore temple. (Dravida order) A temple complex of three shrines.

1. Siva called Kshatriya Simhesvara in a square chatushtala vimana.
2. Siva called Rajasimhesvara in square tritala vimana.
3. Sesha Sayi Vishnu in truncated oblong vimana. Rajasimha style (A.D. 700-28)



57a Shore temple. Kinnara mithuna singing. Rajasimha period. (A.D. 700-20)

57b Shore temple. Adoring Kinnara couple. Rajasimha style. (A.D. 700-28)

57c Shore temple. Kinnara mithuna singing. Rajasimha period. (A.D. 700-28)





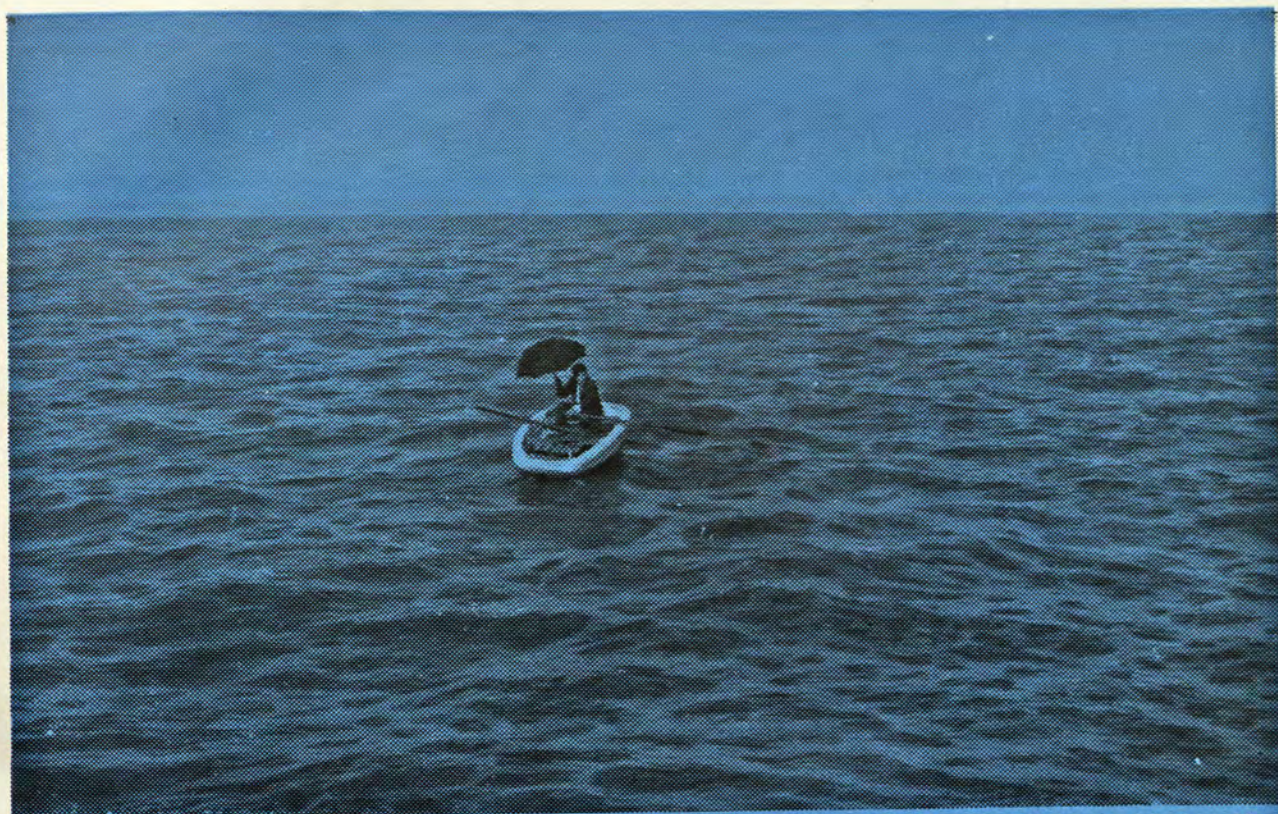
58



60

58. Shore temple enclosure. Siva as Tripurantaka with Vishnu held as an arrow in his lower right hand. Rajasimha period (A.D. 700-28)
59. Shore temple enclosure. Durga carving in a niche cut into the chest of a seated lion, her vahana. Rajasimha period (A.D. 700-28)
60. Vinadhara Dakshinamurti playing on vina with lower left hand. Shore temple enclosure. (A.D. 700-28)





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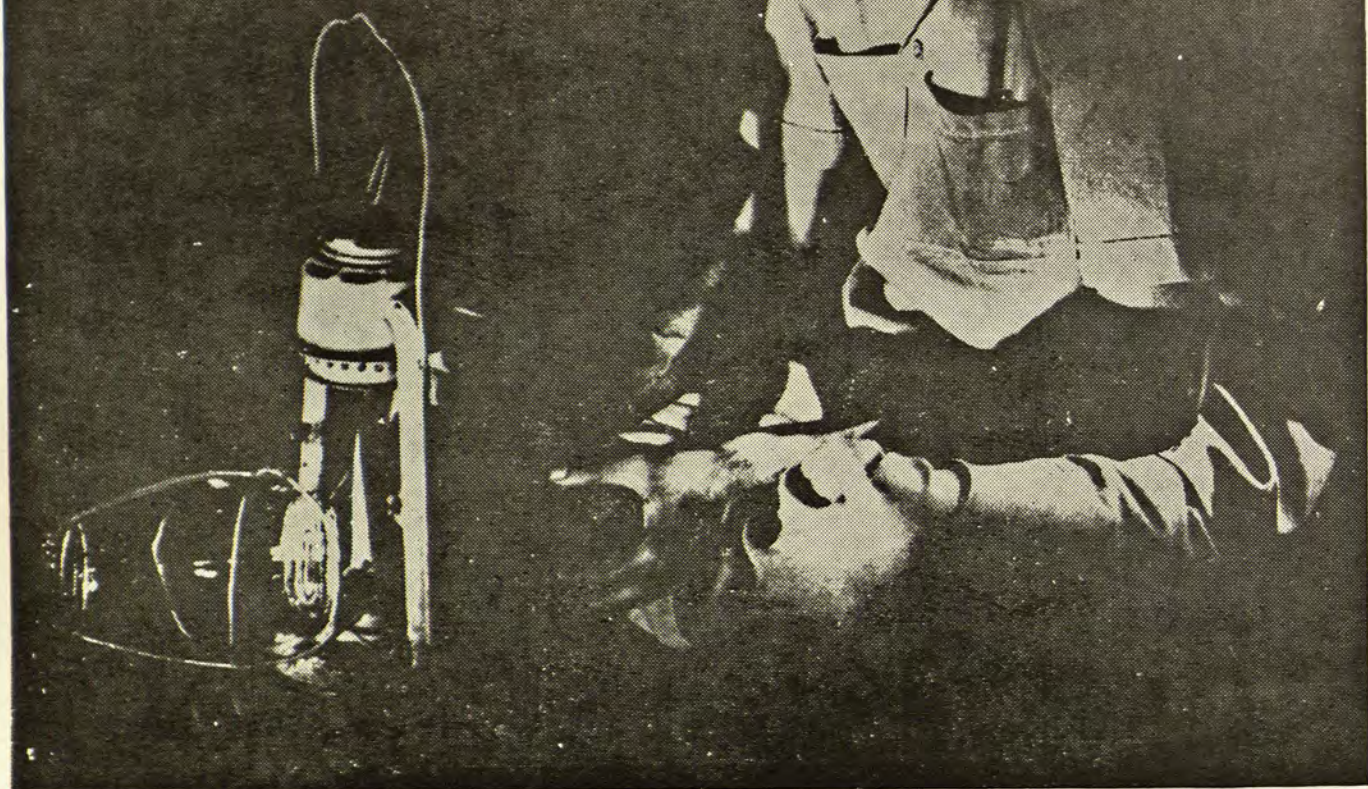
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by John Irwin & Margaret Hall
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by Margaret Hall
- IV INDIAN COSTUMES
by Margaret Hall
- V CARPETS AND VELVETS
by Jasleen Dhamija

The first volume is now in press and will be published this year; others will follow at the rate of at least one each year.

In 1955, the Calico Museum started publishing the first journal devoted to Indian textile scholarship, under the title JOURNAL OF INDIAN TEXTILE HISTORY. The 7 volumes so far published have been eagerly sought by textile scholars all over the world, and the first three volumes are now out of print; selected articles from these have now been reprinted under the title STUDIES IN INDO-EUROPEAN TEXTILE HISTORY, by John Irwin and P. R. Schwartz, now available at Rs.30. The other 4 issues of the Journal are still available from limited stocks.

In 1969, the Museum discontinued the Journal in favour of issuing a series of monographs; the first, entitled PRINTING ON COTTON AT AHMEDABAD, INDIA IN 1678, by P. R. Schwartz, has been published this year. It is based on a 17th-century French manuscript giving an eye-witness account of the contemporary conditions of manufacture. Price Rs. 10.

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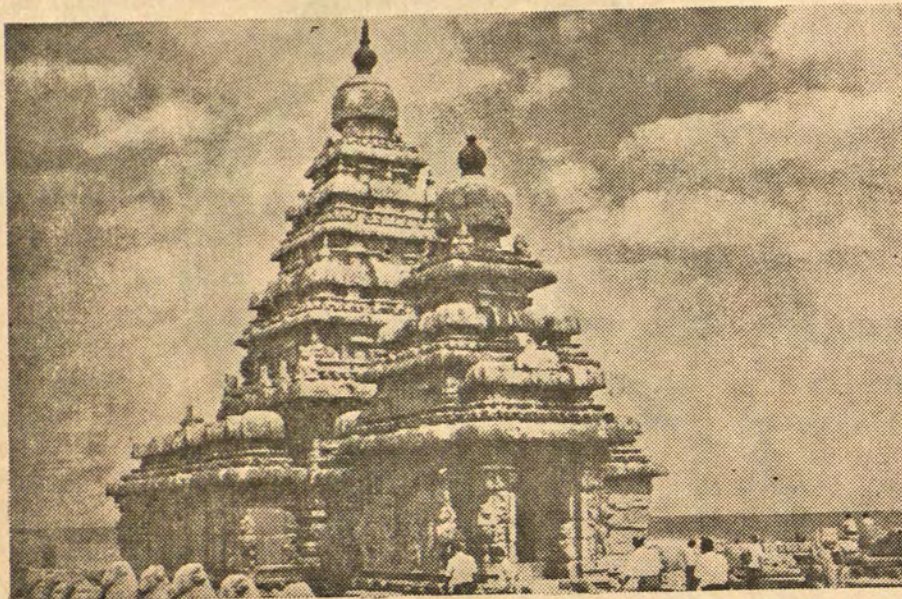
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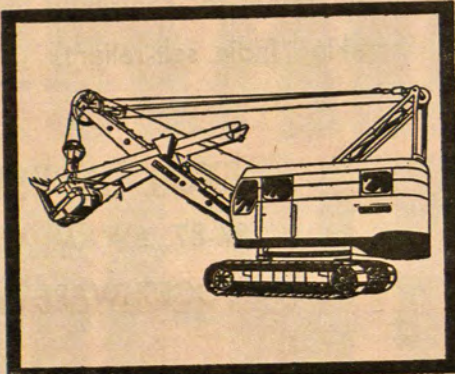
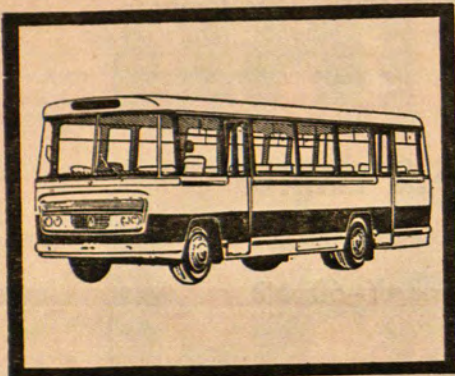
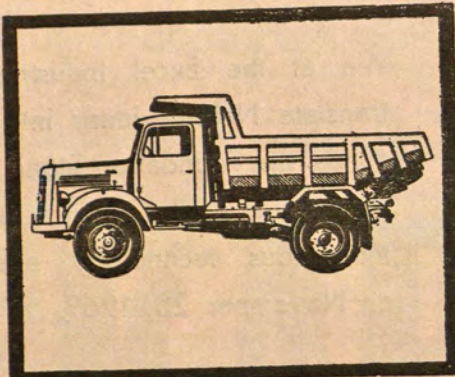
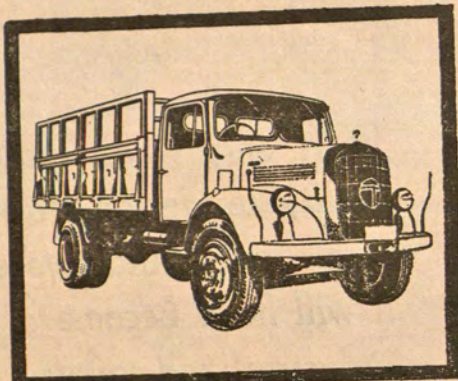
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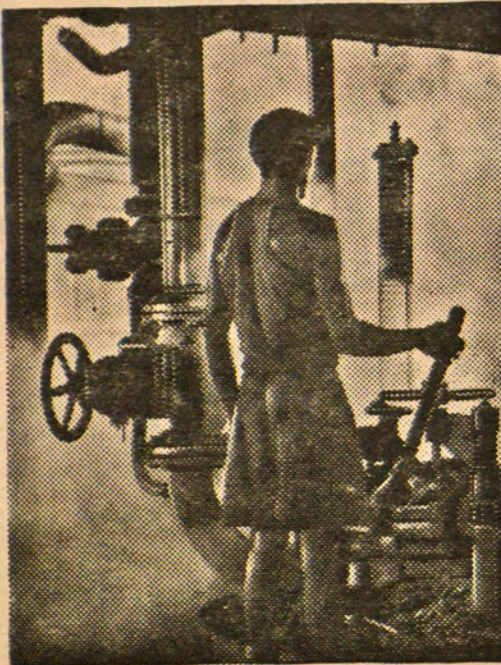
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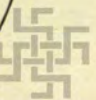


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